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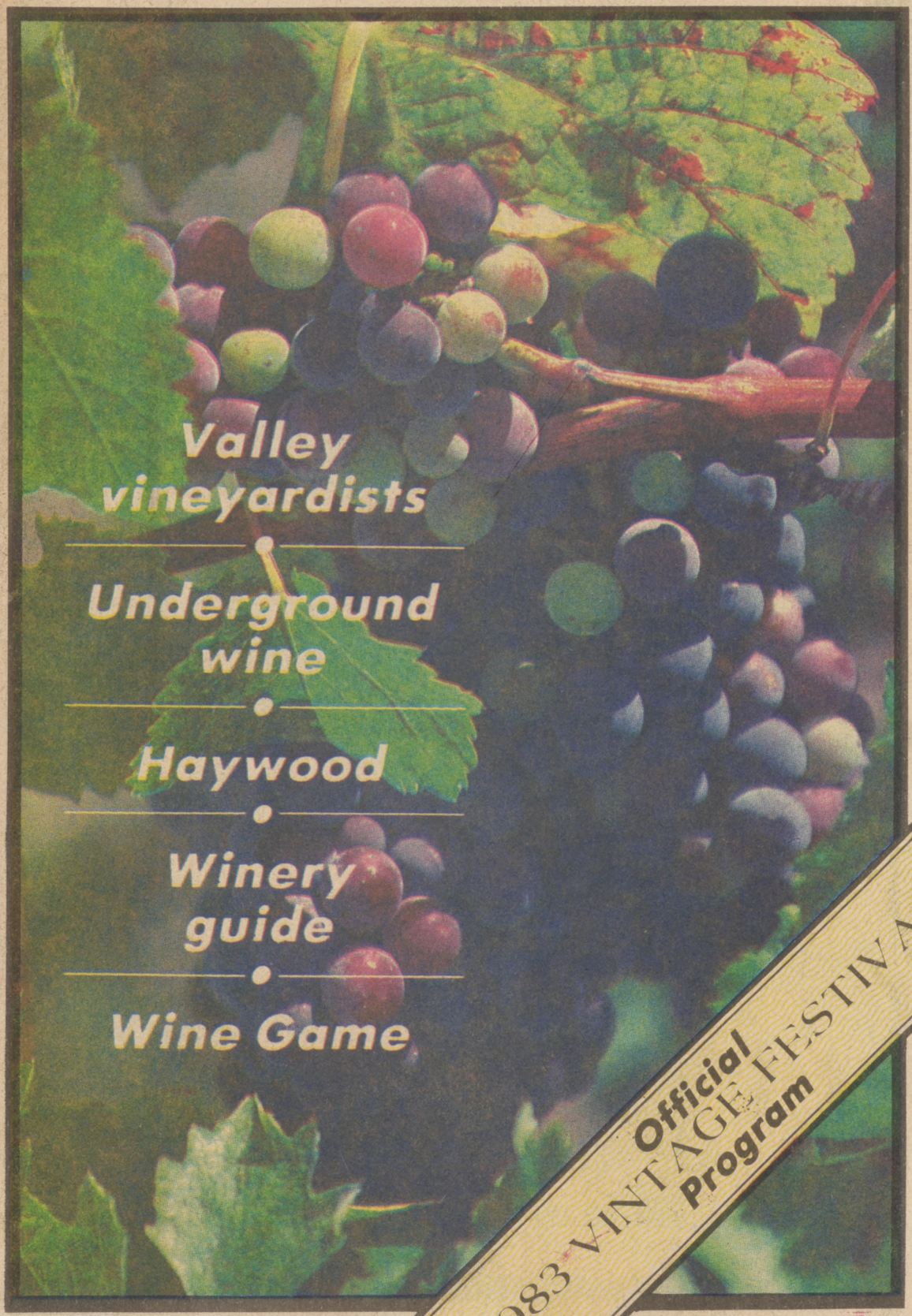
VOLUME ONE NUMBER FOUR

SONOMA VALLEY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 21, 1983



Valley vineyardists

Underground wine

Haywood

Winery guide

Wine Game

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SONOMA VALLEY MAGAZINE

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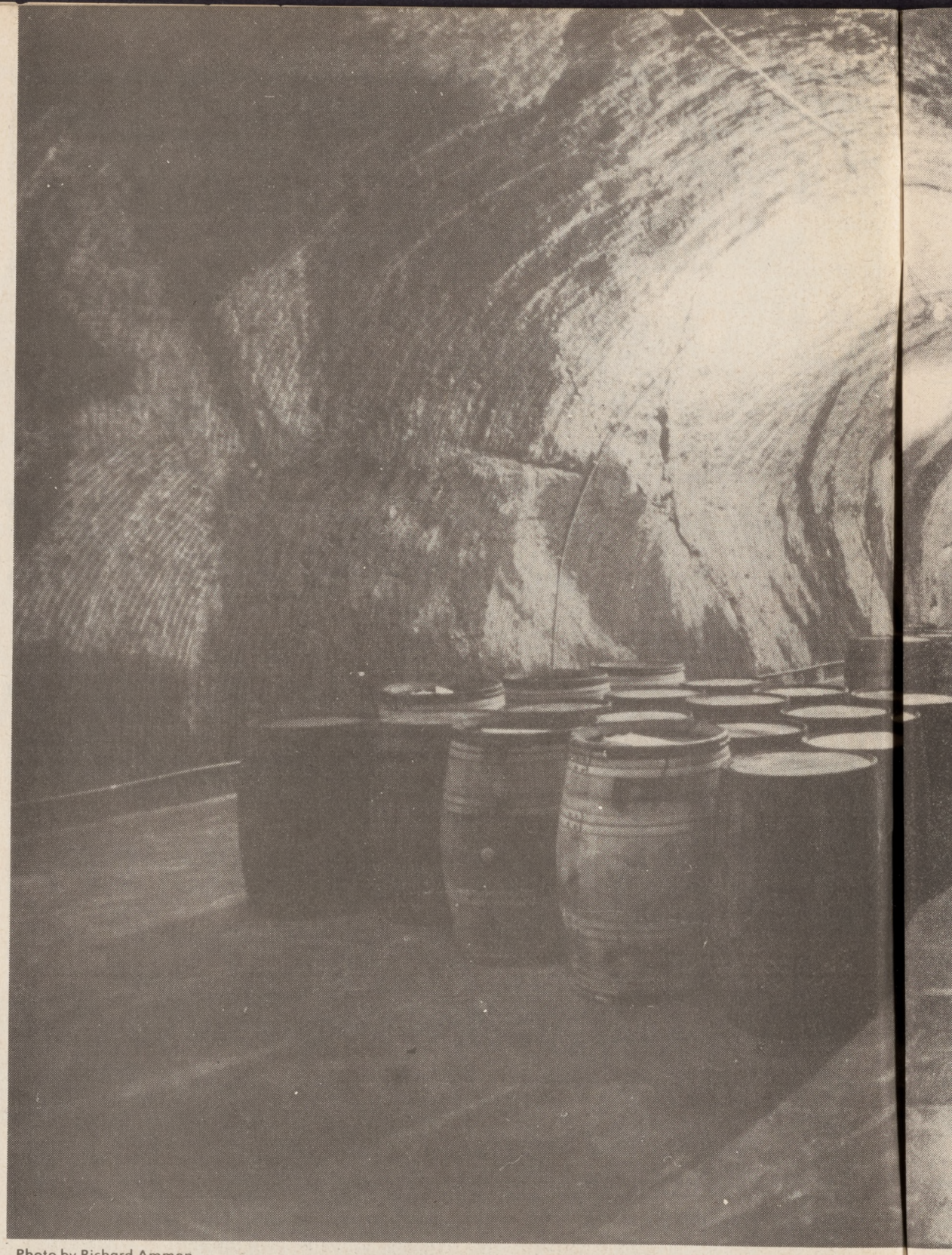
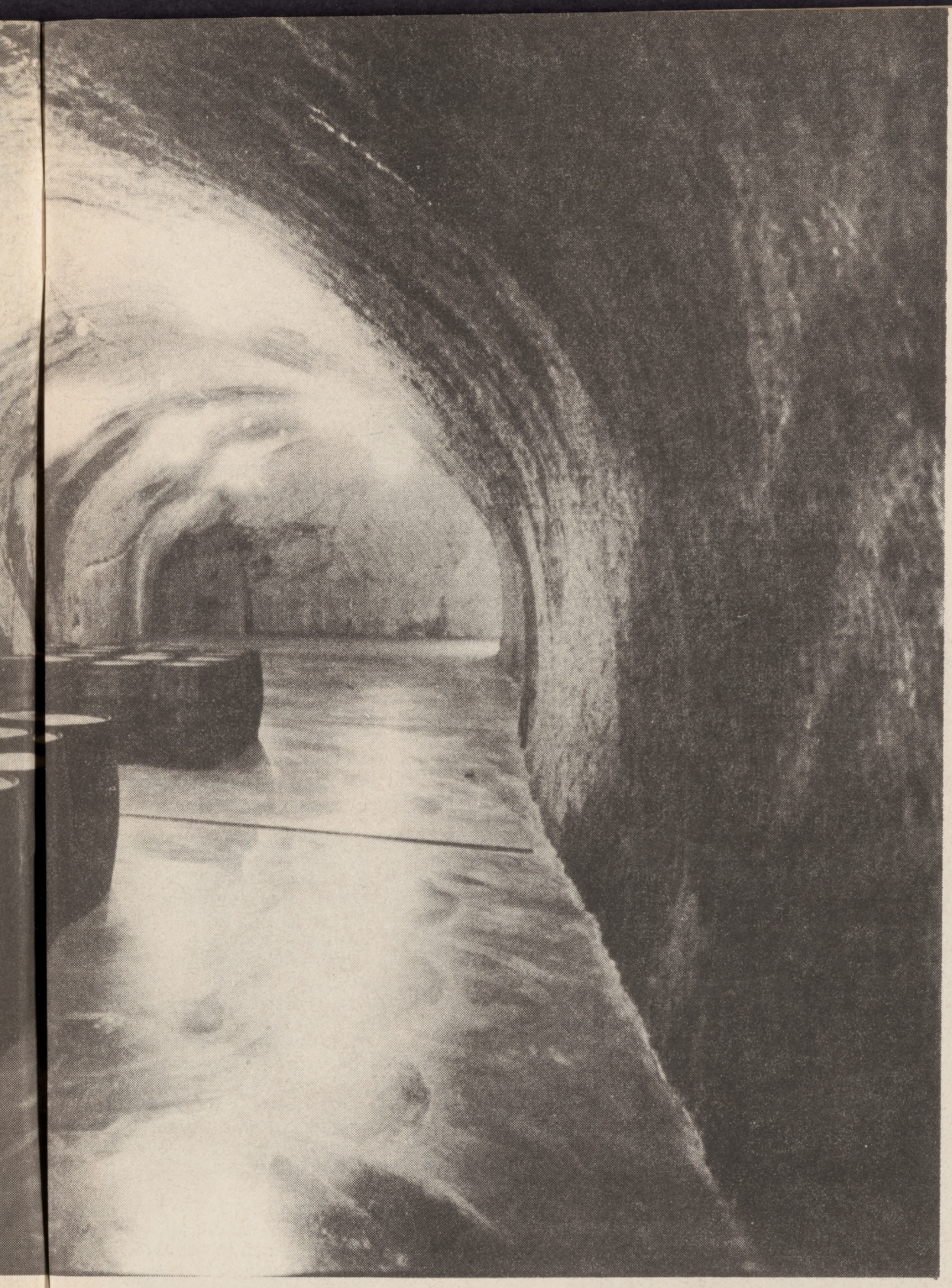


Photo by Richard Ammon

Caves of Carmenet

New valley winery goes underground



By JERRY PARKER

"I think it's the first time a California winery has gone completely underground for its storage since the turn of the century," said Jeff Baker, winemaker and general manager at the new Carmenet Vineyard.

We were standing in front of a high cliff made of tuff, a volcanic ash, into which the Carmenet Vineyard developers have created a series of tunnels and storage chambers for

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SHAPING UP

Fermentation building will be situated in front of embankment into which tunnels have been bored. In the fermentation facility will be 14, 3000-gallon tanks and two, 1500-gallon tanks. Also to be constructed just outside the entrances will be a building which will house a bottling room, laboratory, case storage, and office

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

their future vintages at 1700 Moon Mountain rd.

Baker, 35, said Carmenet, formerly Glen Ellen Vineyards, plans an ultimate annual production of 10,000 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon and 9,000 cases of Sauvignon Blanc.

The wine will be stored in 1,000 French oak barrels, which started to arive at the winery recently. Baker was helping to unload these as he was interviewed.

The tunnels, which radiate into the hill like the spokes of a wheel, were recently completed by Alf Bartleson, of Sebastopol, who handles his mole-like drilling machine like an artist, like Michaelangelo.

There are four storage chambers carved in the hillside, each 26 feet wide and around 15 feet high. They have 15,500 square feet of storage space. Other smaller, fan-shaped tunnels connect with the storage chambers and offer access to the outside. Huge wooden doors will be placed on them. The temperature in the underground chambers remains in the low 50s all the time.

Work is now proceeding on the concrete pads for the fermenting building, which will be situated in front of the high embankment into which the tunnels have been bored. General contractor on the project is Christensen and Foster, of Santa Rosa.

In the fermenting building will be 14, 3000-gallon tanks and two 1500-gallon tanks.

ALSO TO BE built just outside the entrances to the tunnels is a building which will have a bottling room, laboratory, case storage and offices. A smaller utility building will complete the three-building layout.

Designer of the winery is the architectural firm of Dave Sellers and Associates, of Warren, Vermont.

The Carmenet Vineyard is located on the 460-acre former Duggan ranch. The property was acquired by the Duggan family starting in 1928, according to Leonard Duggan, Sonoma mortuary owner.

Duggan said his late father, William Duggan, bought three ranches at the site in the 1920s one from Cap O'Donnell, of San Francisco, and other properties known as the Borden ranch and the Heinz ranch. The Duggan holdings adjoined the Norrbom ranch, said Leonard.

O'Donnell was a bootlegger who made his liquor at his Sonoma Valley place, according to Leonard Duggan. William Duggan and some Italians put some grapes in at the family ranch but really didn't do much with them.

THE DUGGANS built the big, three-story main building at the ranch in the 1940s. The ranch has an abundant water supply, said Leonard Duggan, from both springs and a well.

The ranch was bought about 15 years ago by Alex Horn, a San Francisco impresario and theatrical promoter. He built a Japanese tea house there and a small outdoor theatre and experimented with grapes.

Horn gave up after a few

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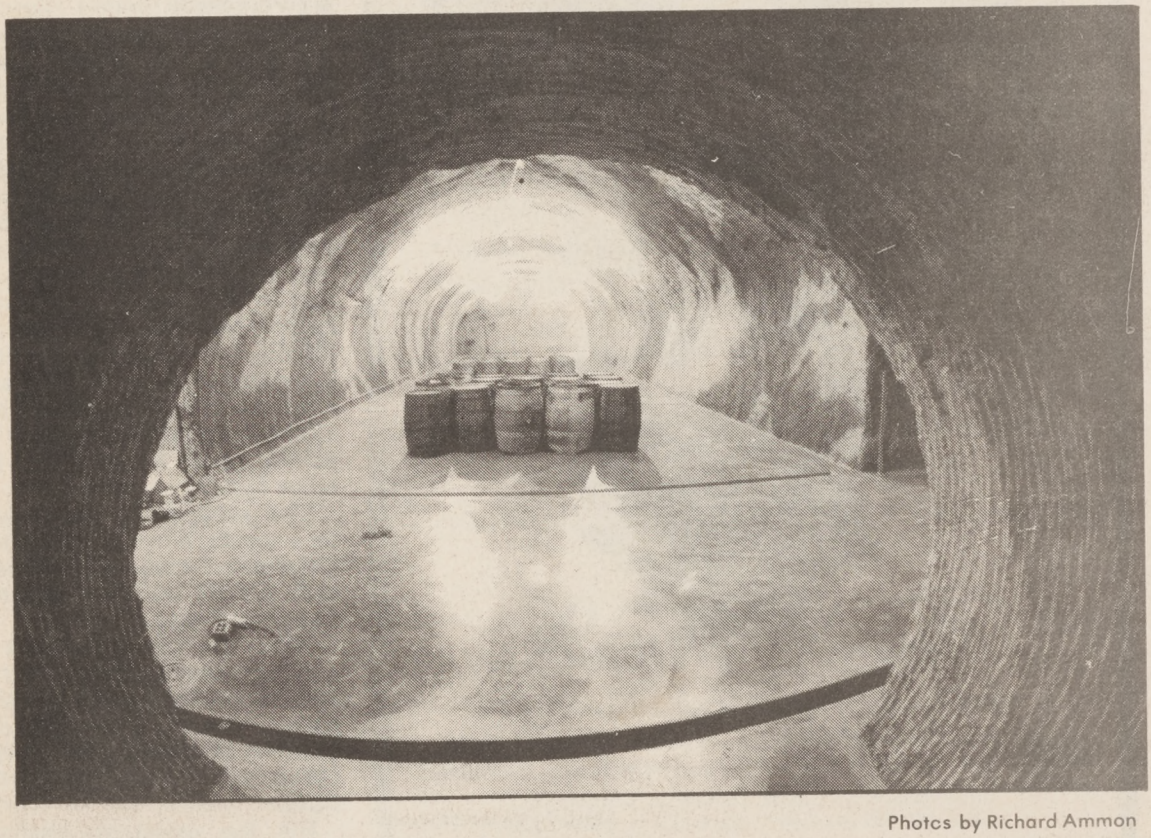
FAN SHAPED TUNNELS
Connect with storage chambers and offer access to the outside. The four chambers are each 26 feet wide and about 15 feet high. There is 15,500 square feet of storage space available. The temperature inside remains in the low 50s at all times



Photos by Richard Ammon

INSIDE CARMENET
Tunnels and storage chambers will house wines stored in 1,000 French oak barrels

'I think it's the first time a California winery has gone completely underground for its storage since the turn of the century'

Photo by Richard Ammon

A MOLE-LIKE DRILLING MACHINE
Used by Alf Bartleson to bore tunnels at Carmenet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

years and from 1972 to 1980, the ranch was owned by Cal Plans, a successful commercial grape growing firm.

The present owners took over in 1980. At first they called their enterprise Glen Ellen Vineyards but that name was also used by a Glen Ellen winery so they changed it to Carmenet.

CARMENET VINEYARD is owned by a corporation that has headquarters in San Francisco. The president is Philip Woodward and the chief operating officer is Richard Graff. The corporation also owns Chalone Vineyards and Edna Valley Vineyards.

Carmenet has not released any wine yet but it made some Cabernet in 1981 and 1982 and plans to make some Sauvignon Blanc this year. It uses the wine making facilities at Edna Valley, near San Luis Obispo.

The vineyard presently has 50 acres of grapes under cultivation and it plans to expand this to 70 acres in the future. Baker said the red volcanic hillside soil is ideal for producing wine. Drainage is good and eliminates any waterlogging. There is an intense, shorter ripening time, he said, and all other factors are superior.

The winery's Cabernet will be a special blend of 85 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 10 percent Merlot and five percent Cabernet Franc.

When the winery is built it will represent an investment of around $2½ million, said Baker, who has a master's degree in winemaking from the University of California at Davis.

His top assistants include Bill Hawley, vineyard manager, and Robert McBryde, assistant wine maker.

Smothers brothers

In valley wine scene

By JOHN LYNCH

Tom Smothers hopes to begin crushing grapes on his property in Kenwood next year.

"Our crush next year will be up here," he told Sonoma Valley Magazine. "We're probably going to move the winery up here, convert it and keep it small for a few years."

Smothers, his brother, Dick, and another partner, Duane Butler, have planned to move the Smothers-Vine Hill Winery, now based in Santa Cruz, to Sonoma Valley. They were successful in securing a use permit in June 1981 to construct a 12,000 square foot winery on Tom's Warm Springs road property. An extension of the use permit was granted by the Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments last September.

Eager to move the operation up to Sonoma County in time for this year's crush, Tom mentioned that he even contacted friend and fellow comedian, Pat Paulsen, to see if he had any spare, temporary space at his winery in Cloverdale.

'It really depends on how the Smothers Brothers' career goes'

SMOTHERS indicated that

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ENTERED: Seven 1982-83 competitions

AWARDS: All Seven

- Gold Medal & Chairman's Award: *1983 Riverside Co. Fair wine judging.*
- Gold Medal & Best of Varietal: *1983 Del Mar County Fair competition.*
- Gold Medal: *1983 Orange County Fair*
- Gold Medal: *1983 Los Angeles County Fair*
- Gold Medal: *1982 Atlanta International Wine Festival*
- Silver Medal: *1982 Sonoma County Harvest Fair*
- Bronze Medal: *1983 San Francisco Fair & Exposition*

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Gregory Vineyards

Dick and his wife, Joey, do all the work themselves

By LESLIE ERICKSON

Grape growers Dick and Joey Gregory wake up every morning in a house smack dab in the middle of 17 acres of vineyards on Burndale road. If the two aren't laboring there soon after dawn, they're working at their Plaza Liquors store in Sonoma.

On occasion, the Gregorys even sell a Gregory Vineyards label of Gundlach-Bundschu Winery at their store.

Thus, they are among the few grape growers in Sonoma Valley to see the fruit of their year-round labors actually head for individual tables.

Photo by Leslie Erickson

PAYING YEAR-ROUND ATTENTION TO THE VINES
But Dick Gregory and family don't mind it a bit

Although it's a labor of love, working the vineyard isn't glamorous. But the Gregorys knew that from the beginning, some eight years ago, when they bought their home, including 10 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon that had seen better days since it was planted in 1946.

After last year's harvest — the Gregorys' seventh — the tractor was paid off and the family finally broke even on the vineyard. This year, the gregarious couple, together with their youngest son, John, 21, hope to do even better.

"We're trying to go for quality rather than quantity," Dick Gregory said. "If we escape the mildew and the shatter (where the ripening small berries burst in extreme heat) we'll have a good production."

Gregory figures the Cabernet Sauvignon should be producing at three tons to the acre, but the vineyard — which is being brought slowly back from its disrepair of pre-Gregory days — only got 10 tons out of six producing acres in 1982.

"You don't get big yields here because the vineyard is so old," Gregory said. He, his wife and his son spend time cutting off old vines and coaxing new ones up from the good root system and the "good ole' Schellville clay."

GREGORY ISN'T worried about the projected 1983 grape glut, which he suspects will most affect the white wine market.

"As a liquor store owner I saw that everyone was buying white, but reds are coming (into popularity)," Gregory said. And, "because everyone (grape growers) went into whites," the family expanded its vineyards this year by planting seven acres in Merlot.

As an experiment, the Merlot was planted from three different stocks — Kunde-grown hot house, two-year field grown and root stalk from Gundlach-Bundschu.

"It's going to tell us what's best for us in this soil," said Gregory, surveying with pride the drip irrigation system he and Joey just finished installing.

"Joey and I do all the work ourselves, (but) friends come in at harvest," Gregory said. "Anybody (as small) who'd have to hire this out wouldn't break even."

By not hiring the work out, the Gregorys are only able to rest the month between the late October harvest and when pruning begins after the first November frost. But, they say that they don't mind that year-round attention to the grape which keeps them housebound.

"My arm and shoulder hurt for three months (after pruning)," Joey Gregory said. But "I really enjoy seeing how we've improved it and how it grows in the spring and summer."

DICK GREGORY acts as his own enologist most of the time, but Jim Bundschu of Gundlach-Bundschu does come out on occasion to test the grapes' acidity and the residual sugar.

Last year, the Gregorys sold their grapes to Gundlach-Bun-

dschu for $550 a ton, a price recommended by the North Coast Grape Growers.

This year, the grape glut may net them more or less per ton, but at least they already have a gentlemen's agreement with Gundlach-Bundschu for the upcoming harvest.

"I don't think anyone with reds will be affected (by the glut), just the whites," Gregory speculated.

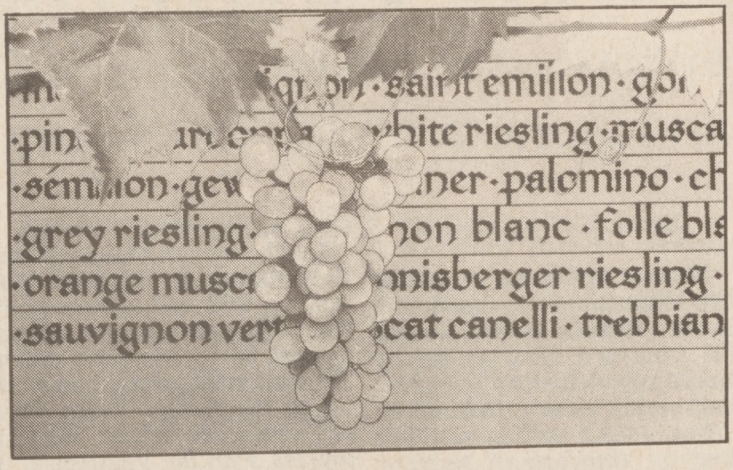
"By tying yourself into one winery and being small, (despite) the glut, you'll always be able to sell your grapes," Gregory said. "It's a small operation — just John, Joey and me — and I take a lot of pride in it when we recommend a Gregory Vineyards wine.

"I think our wines in Sonoma Valley are just as good or better than in Napa Valley," Gregory added.

He carries some vintages of each of the 19 Sonoma Valley wineries at Plaza Liquors, knowing that the "fanatic" element in his customers will buy a Sonoma Valley wine first, a Sonoma County-produced wine second, and a Napa wine third.

The Gregorys have sold almost 115 cases of their 250-case 1979 harvest just in their store alone.

As for tomorrow and beyond, "we're trying to establish a reputation, but for now and the future it will be hard beyond Sonoma Valley because of the small yield," Gregory said.



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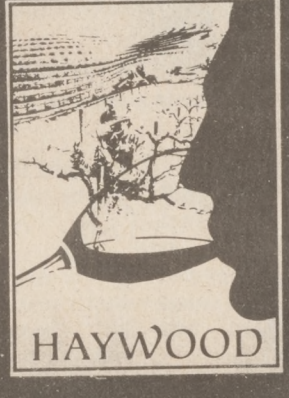

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Allen Torrieri

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather at Nun's Canyon Vineyard

By LESLIE ERICKSON

Nestled in hidden valleys of the Mayacamas Range southeast of Kenwood lies a beautiful vineyard that passersby would never find by accident, but would be glad if they did.

For, such a setting as Nun's Canyon Vineyard off Nelligan road can only be described as "serene."

It certainly is a refuge and a source of strength to 22-year-old Allen Torrieri, who became the third generation to run the 50-acre vineyard when his father, Al, died three years ago.

Nun's Canyon Vineyard was first planted by Grandpa Torrieri in 1902 and subsequently run by his sons before control passed on to grandson Allen. The energetic young man grew up on the remote ranch after his musician father stopped touring with the Vagabonds to become the gentleman farmer.

Torrieri speaks with pride about all his family has accomplished and is determined to succeed himself by expanding the vineyard over the next 10 years. When this year's harvest is in, he'll begin that project by ripping out five acres of original plantings in the crossbreds known in the trade as "Dago Red" and replacing them with Zinfandel.

Zinfandel seems to be the best producer among the several grape varieties that Torrieri nurtures out of the mountainsides of iron-rich, moist, volcanic ash. But, his Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay Beaujolais and Chenin Blanc all do well too.

"EVERYONE for the past five years has been planting Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc," Torrieri commented. "Once all these whites come in, the prices will drop. I'm going to plant red grapes."

Torrieri isn't worried about the expected grape glut this year, figuring that, for him, the extra tonnage brought on by a wet winter will offset any drop in prices that North Coast Grape Growers' Association members might recommend.

Then too, Torrieri is in the second year of a three-year renewable contract with Sebastiani Vineyards for his grapes, so unloading his harvest will not be as difficult as for other growers without similar guarantees.

Torrieri is also grateful to Sebastiani winery for his first experiences in the wine industry. He began on the bottling line and did a little bit of everything else too before devoting himself full time to his own vineyards.

"Every year I learn more and more," Torrieri said. "The first year I didn't know to sulfur and I lost a lot (because of mildew). The second and third years were fine."

Torrieri gives a lot of credit for his expanded knowledge of the grape to neighbors Harry Parducci of Valley of the Moon Winery and to Fred Kunde of

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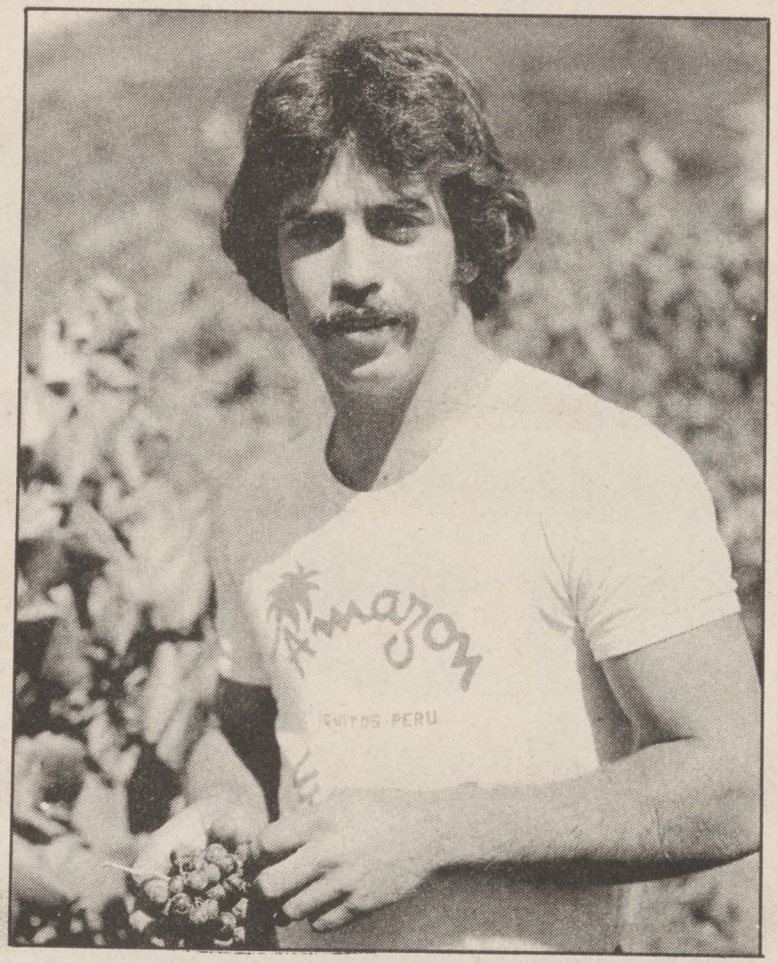

Photo by Leslie Erickson

SERENITY IN NUN'S CANYON VINEYARD
And a lot of hard work for young Allen Torrieri

Dave Steiner

From law school to growing grapes

By JACKIE KRAMER

Steiner Vineyards owner Dave Steiner had never farmed in his life when he bought land atop Sonoma Mountain road over 10 years ago, and planted 22 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. Now he is a full-time farmer deriving most of his income from the grapes he grows and sells to five vineyards.

"I was in law school 10 years ago and I was really unhappy. I knew it wasn't for me, so I started looking all over for land to grow grapes. I finally found this, and it's worked out great for me," Steiner commented.

In his comfortable home atop a hillside overlooking his vineyard, Dave feels he has found the right life, although it's a difficult one at times.

"People have gotten disillusioned fast and lost fortunes in this business," he admits candidly.

"It's a lean and competitive business and the people who work the hardest and have the best grapes and marketing skills will succeed. It's that simple."

PART OF the secret for Steiner's success is that he is involved in every aspect of growing the grapes on the vineyard he planted on an old prune orchard a decade ago. It is situated high above the valley floor, at 1000-foot elevation.

"I haven't spent a nickel on payroll since I finished pruning," he commented. "I do all the tractor work, and almost all of the actual hands-on stuff that's needed here. The only time I hire help is for harvesting and pruning."

He has three men who help at pruning time, and 15 to 20 at picking time.

He sells his grapes on fixed-price, long-term contracts to five wineries: Kenwood, Laurel Glen, Grand Cru, La Crema Vinera (Petaluma Cellars), and Roudon-Smith in Santa Cruz.

"My marketing strategy is to split things up and deal with a few small wineries with high quality standards. Because of the contracts I haven't been hit too badly by the current grape glut," Steiner asserted.

He noted that his average price per ton of grapes is down slightly this year. He gets from two to two-and-a-half tons of grapes per acre.

He feels the advantages of his hillside location include the coolness of the climate. "It takes a long time for the grapes to ripen and the soil isn't too rich, so they don't set too much fruit.

Photo by Jackie Kramer

CABERNET AT 1,000 FEET
Dave Steiner's Sonoma Mountain vineyard

"SURE, IT'S had an effect on me, like maybe a few more gray hairs," he laughed, "but I've developed a good reputation over the years, and so my prices have remained relatively stable.

"Still," he said thoughtfully, "it's very tight on this end of the economic scale. If you don't own your own land, I really don't think you can make it on this small a scale."

"My grapes ripen so slowly that I guess I'm probably the last mountain grower to bring my Cabernet Sauvignon grape harvest in," he noted. Harvest time is about mid-October for the vineyardist.

HE IS HIGHLY laudatory about the quality of Sonoma Valley grapes.

"In fact, I think Napa Valley has a ways to go to catch up with us in grape quality," Steiner said. "Our climate is cooler, with more of a coastal

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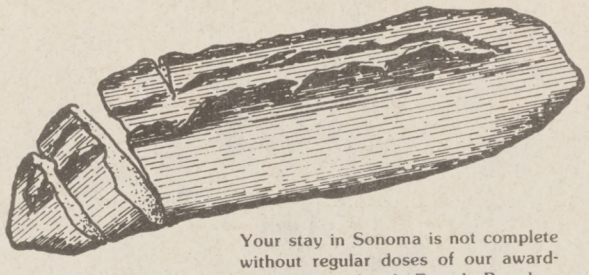

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Torrieri

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

'There's only a few weeks out of the year that I can relax'

Wildwood Vineyards.

He called them up to help solve the mildew problem and again last year when he held back a ton of red grapes that came in at a too-high sugar level of 26 Brix and converted them into a white wine, "Zinfandel Blanc," for his own use.

He may hold back a Cabernet this year.

"MANY people who don't know grapes think there's not much too it," said Torrieri, who is sometimes irked when acquaintances think he lies in bed until noon.

Nothing could be further from the truth, especially now that Torrieri is readying for his favorite time of the year — the harvest.

"There's only a few weeks out of the year that I can relax," he said. "During harvest I'm up at 5 a.m. and I'm not down to the house until 7 (p.m.) The harvest is my favorite time of the year because that's the only time I'm around a lot of people.

"The crop looks better this year than last — maybe five to 10 percent larger," Torrieri continued, adding that although the mountainside yield is not as high as it is in the Valley floor, he still expects about three tons per acre from the Pinot Noir and four tons per acre from the Zinfandel.

"When everyone is picking in the Valley, we start two weeks later because (our) temperatures are cooler," Torrieri explained. "If we get some heat, it'll be the middle of September."

The last of the Cabernet will probably come in in early October, he added. He brings his whites in at 22 sugar and his reds at 23, determinations he

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Little Switzerland

We have a lot of Europe in Sonoma Valley

Your hosts Al & Chris Gruber

A unique experience for the whole family! Established since 1906. People of all nationalities and ages have been dancing to European polkas and waltzes on our old-fashioned wooden dance floor.

We serve a large variety of European beers and liqueurs, as well as delicious European dishes.

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Large mixed salad.....**3.00**
Homemade potato or macaroni salad.....**1.50**
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Roast turkey breast.....**3.50**
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Italian salami.....**3.50**
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Above sandwiches with cheese extra
Monterey Jack cheese.....**3.00**
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Minimum one dollar per person per hour

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Served with French roll or rye bread & butter

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with French fries & vegetable.....**8.50**
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Torrieri

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

makes himself with simple refractometer tests.

AND WHILE Torrieri runs the vineyard single-handedly during the majority of the year, his mother, Barbara, keeps the books.

They hire about 15 to 20 pickers during the harvest season and perhaps only a half-dozen when the "monotonous" job of pruning comes around after the November frosts.

Mother and son are still learning the business together and may experiment soon with paying the pickers by the ton — the more common method — rather than by the box as they have done in years past.

Perhaps even younger brother Michael, 16, will one day come into the business too.

For now, Allen Torrieri is happy to be his own boss except, he said, for the days when the tractor breaks down and everything goes wrong.

It's those days when he most thinks about his second life's ambition — adding an instrument rating and commercial

Filmed at Train Town, Sonoma

pilot's license to his private license and starting up a charter aircraft service locally.

FOR NOW, however, Torrieri mixes aviation courses with evening classes in viticulture and agri-business at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Soon he'll know nearly everything about the grape business, but he has already learned the essential quality necessary to any farmer's survival — patience with himself and with the elements.

He paused a moment to look out over those acres planted behind the house just a decade ago to forestall any future disasters such as the 1964 firestorm and others which have come dangerously close to his property.

"We've got 160 acres of land here — about 50 (beyond that already in vineyard) is plantable," said Torrieri, looking at the land he loves so much. "I hope to expand in the next 10 years.

"I enjoy this kind of work. It's peaceful. There's no time clock."

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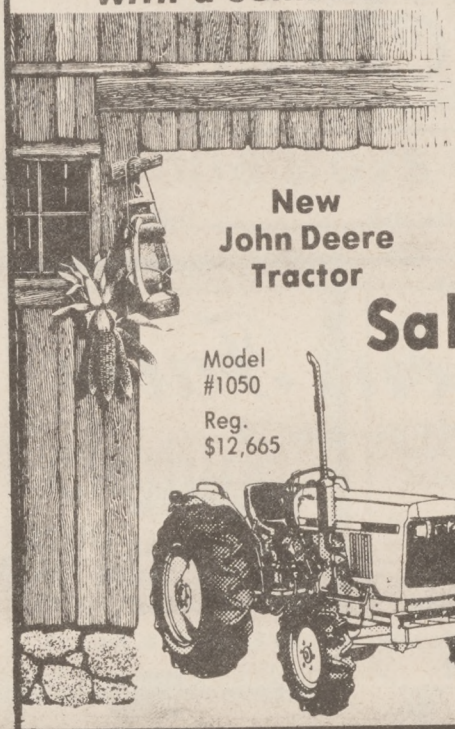

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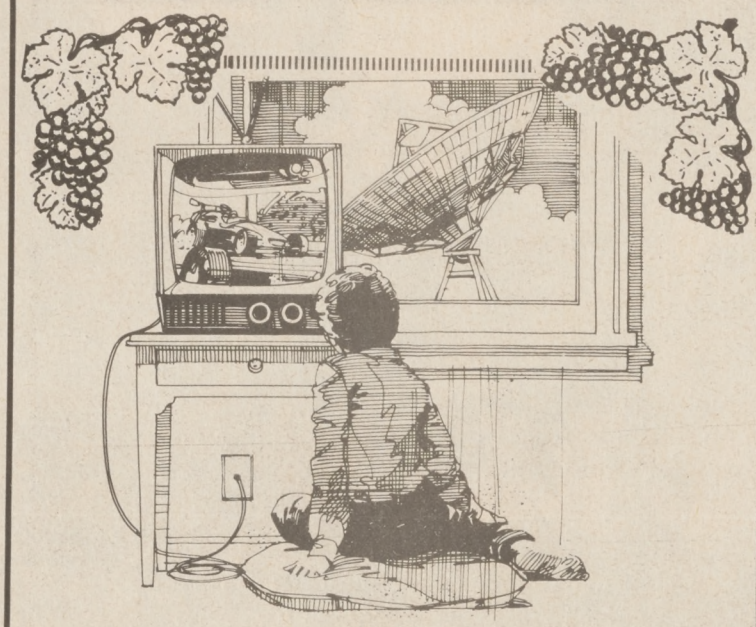

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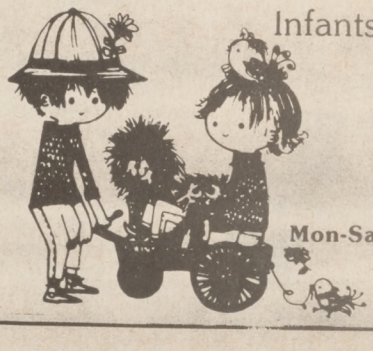

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Smothers

FROM PAGE 13

his winery, which will drop the Vine Hill title once its moves here, will start out producing around 4,000 cases of wine annually; however actual construction of a permanent winery won't get underway until 1985 or 1986, he said.

"It really depends on how the Smothers Brothers' career goes," explained the popular entertainer. "We're out on the road an awful lot now to support the vineyards, pay the growers and workers and so forth, to keep the cash flow going."

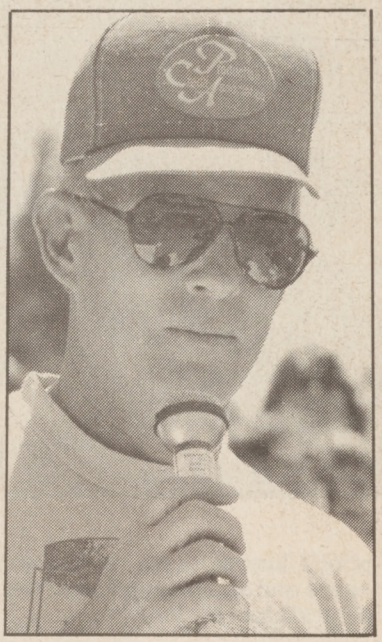

Photo by Richard Ammon

TOM SMOTHERS
Winery to move soon

Smothers has about 30 acres of vineyards on his Remick Ridge ranch in Kewood, mostly Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc grapes, along with about four acres of Pinot Blanc. The vines, managed by local grape grower Phil Coturri, are five years old.

Smothers-Vine Hill Winery, founded in 1977, produces three different Chardonnays (Remick Ridge, California and Sonoma designations) two Gewurztraminers (late harvest and dry styles) and a Riesling.

Red wines include Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon.

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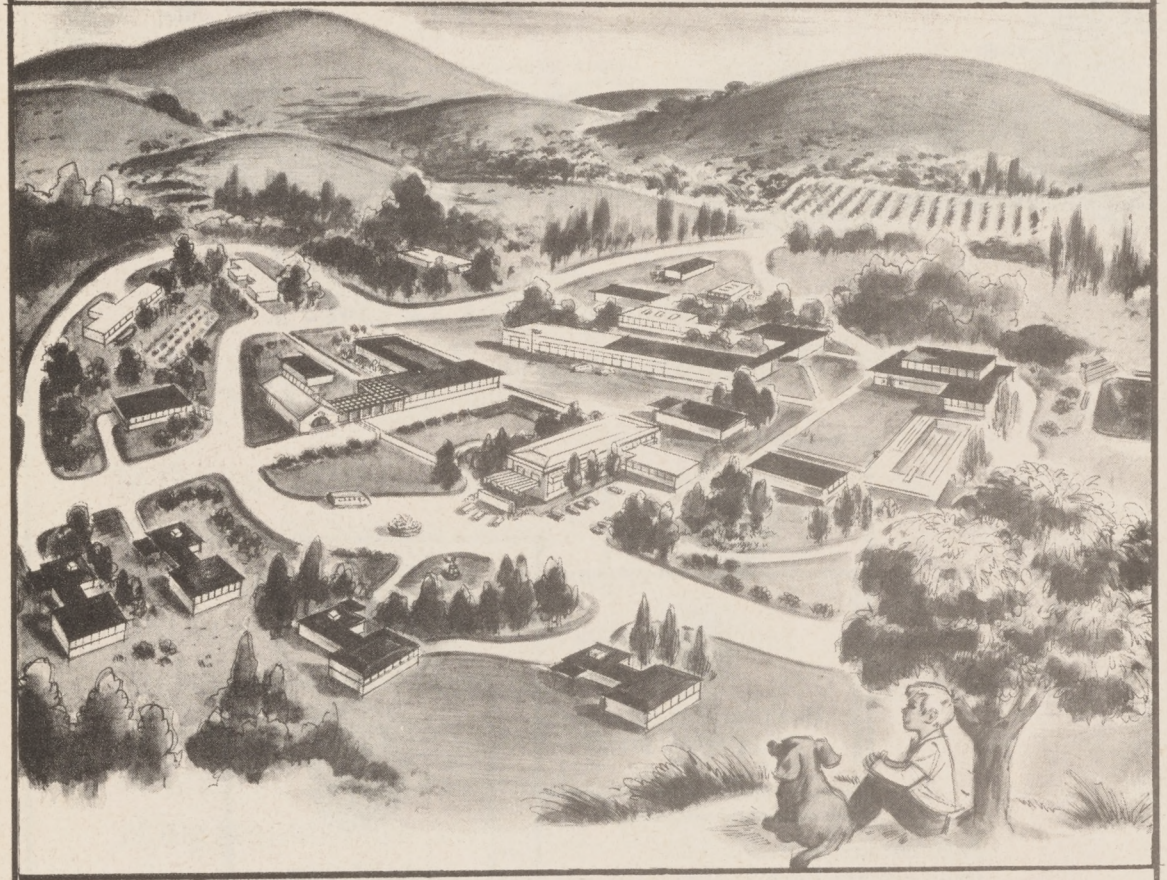

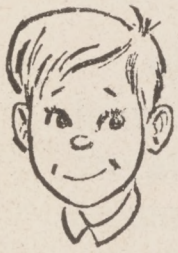

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This year's groups include: Women of the Moose, children's games; Sonoma Valley High School Booster Club, hot dogs, French fries, shrimp cocktails and iced tea; St. Francis Parents Club, hamburgers, snow-cones, cotton candy and popcorn; National Council on Alcoholism, crepes, juices and mineral water; Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department, barbecued spare ribs; Boy Scouts of America Troop No. 10, Salami throw; Shining Examples, stained glass art; Old Adobe School, egg rolls; Valley of the Moon Lions Club, ball throw games; Sons of Italy Lodge No. 1959, spaghetti and French bread. Sonoma Community Center, sausage sandwiches; Sonoma Valley Quilters, hand made quilts; Catholic Community Services Auxiliary, wine, glasses, cheese and bread; Sonoma Valley Ballet Association, wind chimes, dried flowers; Sonoma Trails Committee, donuts, coffee and trail mix; Lions Club of Sonoma, Pepsi Cola; Vintage Leos (Lions Youth Club), dunking booth; Sonoma Valley Art Center, arts and crafts; Sonoma Valley Rodeo Association, Budweiser beer, T-shirts and hats; Society for the Preservation and encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet singing in America, corn on the cob; and Vintage Festival Association, souvenir wine glasses, T-shirts, posters, cookbooks and bumper stickers.

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Steiner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

influence, which is generally an advantage.

"In marketing, however, we have a lot to learn from them," he concluded wryly.

Discussing the problems and challenges of being a vineyard owner, Steiner commented humorously that "survival is probably the biggest challenge. If you do it right, it can be very demanding of one's time. It can also make for personal hardships with relation to your family.

"It's definitely not a 40-hour-a-week job. The glamour is not always apparent on a day-to-day basis, either. You really have to love what you're doing."

That Steiner loves what he is doing, and has learned a great deal in the past 10 years of grape growing, is evidenced by the lush vines with their clusters of slowly ripening grapes hanging heavily in September sunshine.

It's been a true labor of love for the former law school student who derives such pleasure now from being a full-time farmer.

Chauvet

A quality Zinfandel vineyard in Glen Ellen

By TIM OGLESBY

After expressing a strong sense that several California wineries are facing possible failure, Bob Carver still remains convinced that his Chauvet Vineyard in Glen Ellen will be less affected should some wineries collapse. He supported his claim with an analysis of a major problem facing the wine industry today.

"Too much high interest investment capital came into the wine industry too fast," said Carver, a veteran vineyardist who has been a part of the wine industry for 11 years. "The industry needs to seek a capital base that's rational. To think things (high return) grow fast in the wine industry is being naive.

"There has been a lot of marketing greed. The grape growers are not making out, and I don't think that it's the wineries that are making a lot of money, either. I think it's the banks."

Carver is deeply worried about the overall condition of California's wine industry. Although he believes he is safe from extreme harm because of his "solid" five-year contract with Roudon-Smith Vineyards, Inc. of Santa Cruz, Carver expressed concerned for other grape growers.

"WE ARE fortunate that our Zinfandel is at the high end of the retail market," he said. "But there has been a 25 percent erosion in retail prices in Zinfandels over the last year. It's bound to affect growers."

Carver's capital base is relatively sound, he said, because of his low capital base, "rational growth," and the fact that he has only 10 acres of vineyards cultivated. Carver and his wife, Blythe, work the land with little outside help, which is imported, basically, at harvest time.

The full-time international product manager for Optical Coating Laboratory, Inc. still believes that small farming is the best method of achieving the greatest results. He also contends that the government supports this stand.

"Nobody works as carefully as we do at taking care of vines," he added. "I think the government believes that small farmers are the most efficient.

"Properly done, the vines get more intensive care. The small farmer has a healthier future in grapes than does a small, dry-land farmer."

LONG TERM consumer acceptance of fine quality wines will end the current trend toward declining prices, Carver added. That and the slowing of the inflation rate and the end of the current grape glut will add to increased revenues.

"We are pruning our vines to get the best quality grapes," he said. "We don't think it would be wise to cut the quantity of grapes grown to drive prices up. A lot of people, however, have overcropped and underpruned."

Chauvet Vineyards currently produces 1200 to 1400 cases of Zinfandel each year. Carver projects that total to increase to 3000 to 4000 cases once his latest vines on 5.8 acres develops its greatest potential yield.

CARVER WOULD like to expand his potential output. But he suggested that there is progressively less land in Sonoma Valley able to bear high quality fruit.

"The pressure to develop (housing) has increased," said Carver. "Any property that could be used for building on and that would be good for growing grapes is too expensive to buy.

"If I had another 30 acres, I wouldn't be in technical work. When people ask me what I do, I tell them I'm a farmer."

Photo by Tim Oglesby

GLEN ELLEN'S CHAUVET VINEYARD
A rich future in Zinfandel

Wildwood

The Kunde family's vineyards near Kenwood

By TERESA MARIANI

Bob and Fred Kunde just may own one of the largest set of vineyards on the west coast. With some 800 acres of vineyards, they have to come close.

Their grandfather started Wildwood Vineyards near Kenwood in 1904, and the Kundes have been adding more vineyards ever since. The family holdings now include vineyards on Sonoma Mountain, in Windsor and in Hopland, in addition to Wildwood and Kinneybrook Farm in northern Sonoma Valley.

The Kunde business is a family affair. Bob Kunde was born in the white farmhouse at the end of Wildwood Vineyards' Magnolia-lined driveway off of Highway 12; he owns the Kunde corporation along with brother Fred, three other brothers and a sister.

Young cousins Bill and Keith Kunde are also getting into the business of managing the family vineyards, and Bob Kunde's son, Jeff, supervises the Kunde's prize Hereford cattle stock at Kinneybrook.

"The kids are already starting to take over," Bob Kunde laughed.

THE KUNDES SELL all their wine grapes to Sebastiani Vineyards; they have a contract with Sebastiani for the next 10 years.

The family has a veritable wine list in its vineyard stock: Pinot Chardonnay, Muscat Canelli, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Barbera, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Franken Riesling, Gamay Beaujolais, Chenin Blanc, and Gewurztraminer wine grapes are all grown on the Kunde lands.

Out on a tractor at Kinneybrook on a hot August day, Bob Kunde was leveling a field for more wine grapes — this time for 80 acres of certified root stock and top stock for sale to nurseries.

"It gives you a few extra dollars," Kunde explained with a smile. Grape glut or no grape glut, the Kundes are doing well. Bob Kunde credits the climate of the Sonoma Valley and the red, volcanic-ash soil of his own Wildwood Vineyards for the success of his grapes.

"That red soil — you don't see it very often," Kunde explained. "Grandad had it analyzed in Europe and in France. There are no soils that compete with it."

The mild climate in the valley also has a lot to do with the quality of his grapes, Kunde said. The cooler the climate, the slower the grapes grow, making for better wines. "We never get too hot down in this area."

And that's what makes the difference in quality between Sonoma wine grapes and Napa Valley wine grapes, Kunde said.

"The climate in Napa is a little warmer," he added. "We get those coastal breezes here in the afternoon to cool us off."

A LOOK AT the Wildwood and Kinneybrook vineyards

TURN TO PAGE 58

Photo by Teresa Mariani

THE MAGNIFICENT WILDWOOD VINEYARDS

Bob Kunde says climate, soil make local grapes unique

Sangiacomo

A family committed to quality grape farming

By BOB LYNCH

On some 600 acres of land lying south of Leveroni road--most of which was formerly planted to pears, apples and prunes--the agri-business firm of V. Sangiacomo and Sons now produces premium wine grapes.

Photo by Bob Lynch

THE SANGIACOMO BROTHERS
Pictured from left are Buck, Angelo and Bob.

The 56 acres of the original home ranch Vic Sangiacomo purchased south of Sonoma in 1927 was orchard land--pears, prunes, apples and cherries.

Over the years apples and pears became the major crops and the acreage was increased, with 225 acres of pear trees dominating the operation.

Over the years, too, Vic Sangiacomo's three sons--Angelo, 53; Buck, 50 and Bob, 45--have taken over the reins of the family farming business--all equal partners, along with their sister, Lorraine.

The patriarch of the family, Mr. Sangiacomo, although semi-retired, continues to be interested and active in the business.

Angelo, Buck and Bob, in addition to their many years of ranching experience gained since boyhood, all completed agriculture courses at the University of California, Davis, following their graduation from Sonoma Valley High School.

THE MARKETING PROBLEMS involved with pears and apples--plus the growing interest in wines and demands for grapes--transformed the three brothers from orchardists to vineyardists in 1970.

In that year they planted their first grapevines on 200 acres of leased land that they have since purchased.

That initial planting included 135 acres of Pinot Noir, 40 acres of Pinot Chardonnay and 25 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon vines.

Four years ago the Sangiacomos phased out their remaining 30 acres of apples, and in 1981 uprooted all except eight acres of their 225 acres of pears. The following year they planted 216 of those acres to grapes.

In the 600 acres of vineyard carefully nurtured today by the Sangiacomos, with Mother Nature's help, only Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes remain.

"We pulled out the Cabernet vines after determining that our climatic conditions were far more suitable for growing top quality Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes," said Angelo.

THE COOL NIGHTS and warm days, combined with the shallow soil, add up to ideal growing conditions for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

"We are interested in producing quality grapes, the kind our customers demand," said Buck.

"We do not over-crop the vines, and like to hold them to four tons per acre or less . . . that is where we get the maximum quality," Bob chimed in.

"By the way, we have no intention of starting a winery of our own," Angelo emphasized. "We are fully committed to being a reliable, quality supplier to wineries."

CURRENTLY THE SANGIACOMOS sell their grapes to

the Domaine Chandon, Joseph Phelps and Saintsbury wineries in the Napa Valley; to Sebastiani and Gundlach-Bundschu in Sonoma; the Simi Winery, Healdsburg and California Wine Company, Cloverdale.

The Pinot Noir grapes usually ripen the earliest, followed closely by the Chardonnays.

The Sangiacomos work closely with the enologists from the various wineries during the growing season, particularly during the weeks preceding the harvest.

"This year's crop would appear to be average in yield," said Angelo, "and the quality looks to be excellent. We should have no problems marketing our grapes for a fair price."

THE SANGIACOMO BROTHERS and their father have never been sorry that they abandoned their fruit farming pursuits to become vineyardists. Asked what major problems are faced by grapegrowers, Angelo replied, "Compared to pears, there are no problems!"

Mildew and rot, unlooked for early rains and frosts can all be unpleasant to the toiler in the vineyard, it was acknowledged. "Our vineyards are protected from frost--40% by wind machines and 60% by an overhead sprinkling system," Bob explained.

Caring for the vineyards is a year-around job. Pruning extends January to March, with frost protectioninstituted from mid-March till May 15. Cultivation--disking and plowing begins the first of April and dusting (with sulphur only) for mildew is carried on through the middle of July.

"Suckering" of the vines is carried out the midle of April and in mid-June those vines needing it are irrigated. Seventy-five percent of grown vines in the Sangiacomo vine-

TURN TO PAGE 36

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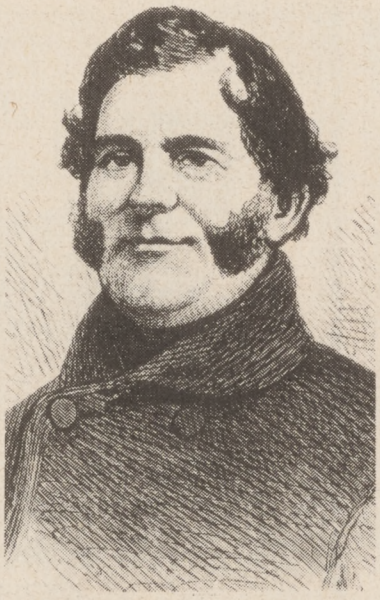
The General

Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo founded Sonoma to

General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, founder of Sonoma and Commandante Generale of all that part of Alta California from the Golden Gate to the Oregon country, and from the Pacific Ocean to the Sacramento River, was born in Monterey on July 4, 1807.

His distinguished Spanish ancestry stemmed from the time of Columbus, and as a youth he was groomed for a military career.

He was the son of Don Ignacio Vicente Ferrer Vallejo, a native of Las Canadas, of the state of Jalisco, Mexico, who came to California as a member of the expedition of Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada in 1774. He became a cadet in the Monterey Company of the Mexican Army and secretary to Governor Luis Arguello at the age of 16.



GENERAL VALLEJO
Founder of Sonoma

In 1831 while only 24, he was placed in charge of the Presidio of San Francisco and for the next five years helped to organize the first town government for San Francisco.

THE PRESENCE OF THE RUSSIAN colony at Fort Ross posed a threat to Mexico's role in California at that time. In 1835 Governor Jose Figueroa selected young Lieutenant Vallejo to command a group of soldiers at Sonoma as a buffer against the Russians to the north.

He held the joint title of Military Commander and Director of Colonization on the Northern Frontier. He laid out the largest plaza in all California and

thwart Russian encroachment

made this the center of the town of Sonoma

His orders directed him to preside over the secularization of the Mission San Francisco Solano at Sonoma, the only one of California's 21 missions established under Mexican rule.

In the latter assignment he attempted to be as humane as possible. He allotted portions of the mission lands and cattle to the Indian neophytes and launched them as independent ranchers.

Vallejo, himself, became perhaps the largest landholder in this part of California at that time. A section of Solano County, 80,000 acre Rancho Soscol, was granted to him in March, 1843 by Governor Micheltorena. His Petaluma Ran-

TURN TO PAGE 62

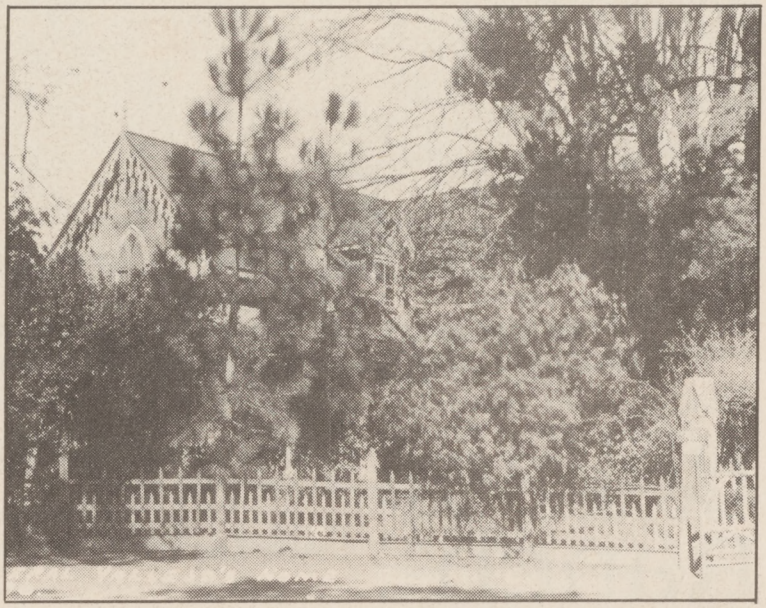


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Photo by Joan Casserly

BELTANE RANCH VINEYARD MANAGER JOHN BENWARD
Grooming a steady award-winning crop for Kenwood Vineyards

Beltane Ranch

Prize grapes for Kenwood

By JOAN CASSERLY

As a distinctive part of Sonoma Valley history, the Beltane Ranch, located near Glen Ellen, has certainly earned a name for itself.

Longevity could be one reason.

The family owned and operated ranch has been a well-known Sonoma Valley establishment since 1936.

Consistently maintaining a high quality product could be another reason the ranch is held in such high standing.

Earning the distinction of producing a ranch designated Beltane Chardonnay wine, the operation has played a role in providing a consistent award winning product in various state wine competitions, capturing several gold and silver medals.

THE BELTANE Ranch grape varieties, primarily Chardonnay, are purchased by Kenwood Vineyards and Winery. This successful business relationship was initially established in 1978.

According to Beltane Vineyard Manager John Benward, the ranch and the winery have maintained a considerably close relationship.

"We are on the same team," Benward commented, "We (the growers) have a net effect on their wine making. It is important that the winery takes part in the growing and planting. The winery should have input about these things."

ON A DRY LAND steep hillside are 40 acres of existing Beltane Chardonnay vineyards.

Earlier in the year, ranch management decided to expand, planting additional Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc vines on shallow, rocky soil on the Valley floor.

The rewards are forthcoming, as this crop won't be bearing fruit until 1985.

Choosing a location for new vineyards is no easy task, according to Benward.

A University of Arizona, Tucson, graduate who majored in agriculture, Benward has been vineyard operator since coming to Sonoma Valley in 1976. His job entails overseeing the vineyard-associated activities, supplies, equipment and supervision of help.

AMONG THE numerous conditions the vineyardist must consider in the long term proposition of planting new vines are climate, exposure, drainage and soil type.

A key to successful growing is matching the right grape variety with the right location.

Benward explained that before any planting occurred, rather extensive research on the land was conducted to see what type of variety would be best suited for that particular microclimate.

AS FOR growers who elect merely to plant a certain grape variety because the market for that brand appears to be thriving, Benward feels this practice is futile.

"You are only fooling yourself if you are planting for the market," he said, explaining that by the time the grapes are harvested the prices, which are so flexible, could be markably higher or considerably lower.

Benward said plans for the

TURN TO PAGE 38

Photo by Richard Ammon

PLAYING 'THE WINE GAME'
A natural for Sonoma vineyard manager Dennis Bowker

Wine Game

Local grower hits the jackpot

By JOAN CASSERLY

The wine business is a high risk, competitive one and the recently released game invented by a local vineyard manager, Dennis Bowker, is virtually no different.

It is the wine country's version of Parker Brothers' Monopoly.

And with the way sales are taking off, "The Wine Game" *will* become a monopoly.

Originally, 1,000 copies of the game were printed up to carry through until the summer of 1984.

Yet, the demand for the new game has far exceeded the inventor's original expectations and the initial 1,000 copies have already sold out.

"The Wine Game" is sold at Kenwood, Buena Vista and Sebastiani wineries, The Sonoma Cheese Factory, and Sonoma Wine and Spirits and in other Sonoma Valley locations.

THE GAME has a local flair to it, as almost all the wineries featured are located in Sonoma Valley.

Bowker, who had expected the game to "take four or five years to catch" is a bit taken back by the incredible success of it.

"We have had three years progress in the last month," he said, obviously a bit overwhelmed by it all.

The 37-year-old vineyard manager originally thought of the idea for the game when he was pruning vines.

After a year and one half of mentally devising the game, Bowker began working on the design, art coordination, the drawing and the writing approximately seven months ago.

THE GAME is played on the simple premise of making a profit. Each player is supplied with a winery. Players move around the board buying grapes, bottling and selling the wine. Interesting situations such as winery worker strikes, provide obstacles that players must overcome.

"I wanted to make it simple to play," he said, acknowledging the fact that if a game is too difficult, its appeal is limited.

In the early stages of the game's development, it was much too difficult so Bowker simplified it and let a few complexities remain. This simplification of the game may have contributed to its popularity, he said.

Another reason for the wide spread interest in the game is the subject matter itself.

"There is a mystique about California wines," he said.

THOUGH THE major theme of the game is wine, Bowker contends that successful players do not have to be especially knowledgeable about wine.

"You don't have to know a thing about wines. It doesn't matter if you know the difference between Chardonnay and Cabernet," Bowker said, adding that as far as he knows, he holds the record for the lowest finish in The Wine Game.

Though the game was originally geared toward adults, teenagers have developed an interest in it too.

The innovative Bowker realized when he began "The Wine Game" project that financially, he was venturing into the unknown.

"It was a huge gamble," he said, "But I'm a gambler at heart."

This certainly is one gamble that is paying off.

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Sangiacomo
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

yards are not irrigated. The 25% that is are located in shallower soil.

AT THE PEAK of the harvest the Sangicomos have 75-80 employees, and have 20 they retain year-around–providing a significant payroll for the community.

> '. . .We have no intention of starting a winery of our own.'

The three brothers, a remarkably compatible team, express little concern over the fact that a surplus of wine grapes currently exists.

"We still believe that the grower who produces a good quality grape in the proper areas is going to be able to market them for a profit," said Angelo.

Buck and Bob nodded in agreement.

The transformation from orchard to vineyard has been an obvious success for V. Sangiacomo & Sons.

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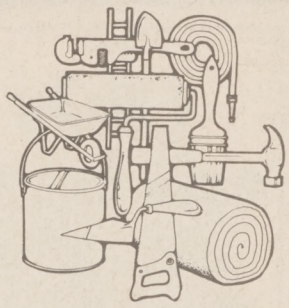

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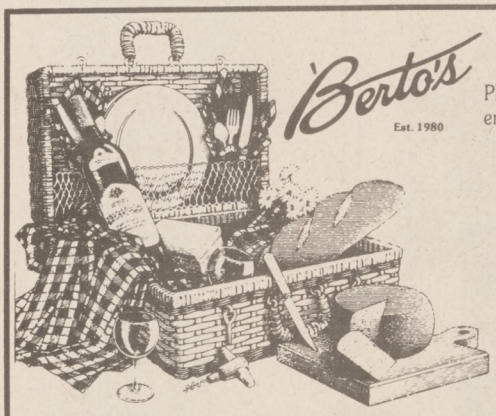

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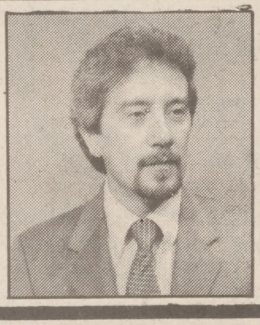

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ranch's newly planted grapes include keeping them separate from the hillside varieties so they eventually will be able to compare them.

Other plans being considered include expanding the vineyard acreage. Yet, those plans are still in the developmental stages.

Benward, who lives on the ranch with his wife, Alexa, and two children, Lauren and Alex, is quite content to be a part of the wine industry and is equally pleased to reside in Sonoma County.

"It is very enjoyable work," he commented, adding, "But it is not light, easy duty. The job is time consuming and a lot of people don't know about the dirt and the long hours."

But the difficult work is well worth it for Benward, who is very serious and dedicated to the business.

"Gratification is what is important," he said, "I am certainly happy to be here and very pleased to live in the area."

THE EVOLVING image of Sonoma Valley is another thing Benward is pleased about.

"Sonoma Valley is earning a name for itself," he said, "We are the new guy and we are beginning to get noticed."

As far as the spirit of competition between Napa and Sonoma Valleys, Benward believes "that nothing could be better for California wines."

The primary difference between the two valleys is that Napa is more established.

However, Napa does no have any kind of varietal advantage over Sonoma County he said.

And though, Benward stated, Sonoma County will never be a tremendously large volume wine producing area, as is Napa, the high quality of Sonoma Valley wines, definitely makes up for what it lacks in size.

Benward is a man who practices what he preaches.

"All of California is making a name for itself," he said, "But when I go into a restaurant I order a Sonoma Valley wine and not a Napa Valley wine."

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The Bear Flag

It was in Sonoma 137 years ago that a new 'California Republic' was proclaimed

An annual feature of the Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival is the recreation of the raising of the Bear Flag in the northeast corner of Sonoma Plaza opposite General Mariano G. Vallejo's former military barracks.

It was here were the Bear Flag revolution occurred and where our State Flag was first made and raised on June 14, 1846.

The flag of California, with its grizzly bear and star, is an emblem with a colorful history. Although the Bear Flag was not adopted as the State Flag until 1911, it was the first flag to fly over California after Mexico's commandante here, General Vallejo, had been taken prisoner, and pioneer Americans proclaimed "The California Republic."

This hardy band of adventurers, traders and trappers had crossed the plains and scaled the rugged mountains long before the days of gold. The call of a new empire lured them here—California, the land of opportunity, was even then a word of magic!

THE BEAR FLAG MONUMENT
The monument in Sonoma Plaza commemorates raising of Bear Flag here June 14, 1846.

MEXICO, THEN in possession of California, began to suspect the presence of these men, particularly Captain John C. Fremont, presumably making surveys for a trade route into California, but believed by General Castro and other Mexicans to be bent on conquest for the United States.

Suspicious of the constantly growing number of Americans collecting around Sutter's Fort, and settling in the Sacramento, Napa and Sonoma valleys, the Mexicans finally ordered all Americans to get out of California.

This was too much for the Yankees, and knowing that the United States was having trouble with Mexico that would sooner or later lead to war, they determined to hasten American occupancy of California.

Riding all one night from the Sacramento Valley, 30 horsemen rode into the Mexican Pueblo of Sonoma at sunrise June 14, 1846, and took General Vallejo prisoner.

AFTER SEIZING the military barracks and rusty cannon of the town, the Americans, under William B. Ide, decided that they needed a flag to run up on the Plaza's staff where the Mexican emblem was flying.

Material was scarce, but William "Dirty" Matthews, an express rider between Sonoma and Sutter's Fort, persuaded his wife to give her red petticoat to the cause, and the new blacksmith's wife, Mrs. John Sears, gave a piece of unbleached muslin, or manta cloth, which she had brought across the plains in a wagon train from Missouri.

William Todd, a nephew of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, volunteered to make the flag after the pioneers agreed that they wanted a grizzly bear on it and a star like the flag of Texas. The flag was made from the unbleached muslin with a red strip across the bottom, and a crude bear (some say it looked more like a pig) was painted with red paint on the white field and the words "California

TURN TO PAGE 55

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CHATEAU ST. JEAN—Located at 8555 Sonoma hwy. in Kenwood. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m to 4:30 p.m. Tours from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Picnic area provided. Phone 833-4134.

GLEN ELLEN WINERY—Located at 1883 London Ranch rd., Glen Ellen. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tours for large groups by appointment only. Phone 996-1066.

GUNDLACH-BUNDSCHU WINERY—Located at 3775 Thornsberry rd., Sonoma. Take Napa st. out of downtown Sonoma heading east. Make a left turn on to Old Winery rd., then a right to Lovall Valley rd. and proceed to Thornsberry rd. (a right-hand turn). Tasting room open daily 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Self-guided tours. Picnic area. Phone 938-5277.

HACIENDA WINE CELLARS—Located at 1000 Vineyard ln., Sonoma Take Napa st. east out of Sonoma to Seventh st. east. Turn left. Take Seventh st. to Castle rd., turn right. Proceed to Vineyard ln. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Picturesque picnic area-wine garden. Phone 938-3220.

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HANZELL VINEYARDS—Visitors by appointment only. No tasting. Phone 996-3860 or 996-0431.

HAYWOOD WINERY—Located at 18701 Gehricke rd., just north of Sonoma. Tours by appointment only. Phone 996-4298.

HARASZTHY & SON—Located at 14301 Arnold dr. in the London Glen Village, just north of Sonoma State Hospital, in Glen Ellen. Phone 996-3040.

KENWOOD VINEYARDS—Located at 9592 Sonoma hwy. near the intersection of Warm Springs rd., in Kenwood. Tasting room open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except major holidays. Tours by appointment only. Call 833-5891.

KISTLER VINEYARDS—Located at 2995 Nelligan rd., Glen Ellen. No tasting or tours. For more information, write: 2995 Nelligan rd., Glen Ellen 95442.

MATANZAS CREEK WINERY—Located at 6097 Bennett Valley rd. in Bennett Valley between Kenwood and Santa Rosa. Tours by appointment only. Phone 542-8242.

RAVENSWOOD WINERY—Located at 21415 Broadway, Sonoma. Tours and tastings by appointment only. Phone 938-1960.

RICHARDSON VINEYARDS—Located in Schellville. No tastings or tours Contact local liquor store or wine shop proprietors for information about availability of Richardson wines.

SEBASTIANI VINEYARDS—Located at 388 Fourth st. east in Sonoma, one mile east of the Plaza. Take Napa st. to Fourth st. east and turn left. Tasting room open daily 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Tours fom 10 a.m to 4:30 p.m. daily. Visitors urged to get there early on weekends. Picnic area included. Phone 938-5532.

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VALLEY OF THE MOON WINERY—Located at 777 Madrone rd. in Glen ellen. Take Hwy. 12 north out of Boyes Springs to Madrone rd. Turn left. Tasting room open daily except Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone 996-6941.

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The Vintage Festival celebration could not be the success that it is without the aid and assistance of the numerous volunteers who donate time, energy and money to the fund raisers and the festival itself.

As we go to press, we are listing some of those people and organizations who have lent a hand, a facility, or done one, or more, of those hundreds of separate efforts which make the whole.

We know we have missed many people and to them we offer our apologies along with our thanks:

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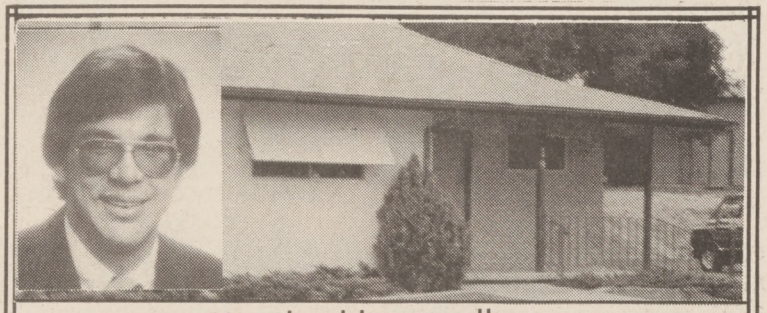
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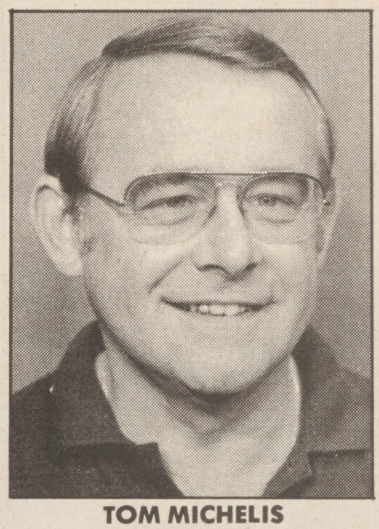

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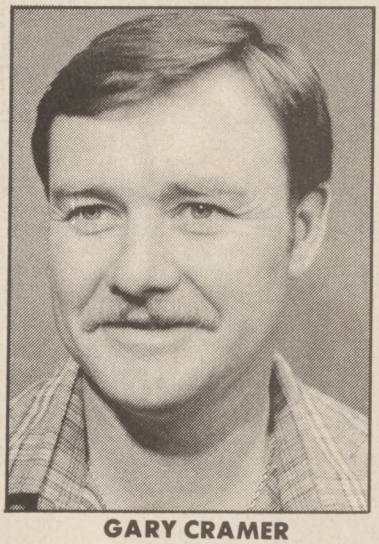

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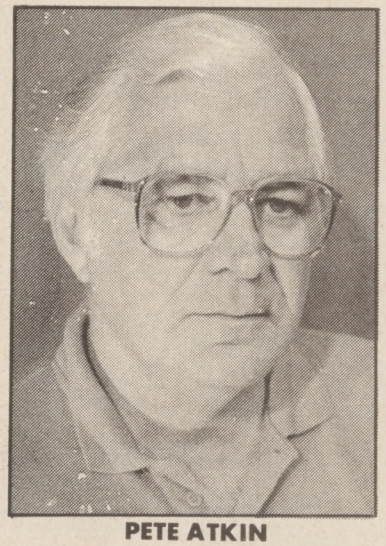

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President's message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 1983 Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival. Each year, shortly after our many Vintage Festival visitors return to their homes in Sonoma, other California communities nearby and afar, and to many of the other states in the union and to foreign countries, the Board of Directors begins planning and preparing for the following year. This year, the very capable and innovative Board has done itself proud and it is with pride that we present Vintage Festival, 1983.

First the money must be raised. Prize giveaways, dances, and other fund raisers provide some of it. Sonoma County through the "Bedroom Tax" helps with our advertising expense. Our backbone is those generous people listed on the next couple of pages - who provide not only a great deal of the cash but the encouragement to work all year to bring you the Vintage Festival. Finally, and by no means least, our cause is greatly enhanced by many of our merchants and wineries who provide us with donations and discounts to enable us to stay solvent for another year.

To all these wonderful people, businesses and institutions, we are deeply grateful.

Now, the grapes are being harvested, the Vintage Festival is here, so we invite you to share our harvest of fun, entertainment, good living and our beautiful town with us. We hope you will enjoy the fruits of our vines as well as the fruits of our labors. Thank you for joining us.

Sincerely yours,
Tom B. Michelis
President

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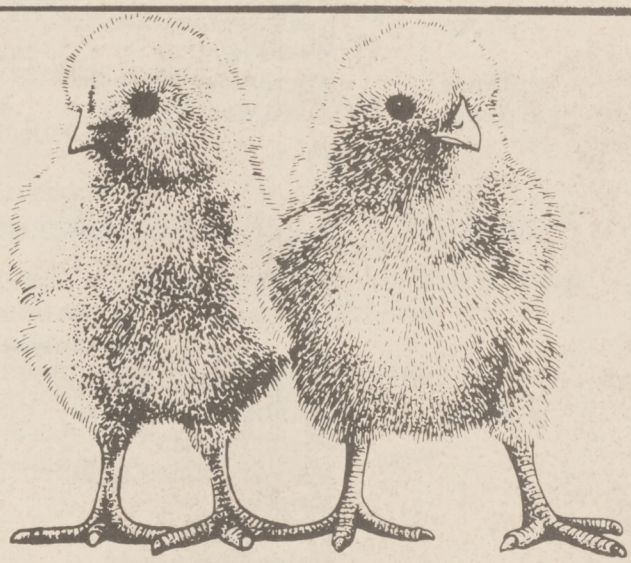

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An information booth, courtesy of the Soroptimist Club of Sonoma Valley, will be staffed by club members to answer questions and provide free copies of the Index-Tribune's "Sonoma Valley Magazine" with Festival program. The booth will be located in the northeast corner of the Plaza near the Bear Flag Monument.

PROG

37th A

Valley of the Moon

Friday, September 23

6:30 - 9:00 pm	Patrons Wine Tasting Party Music by Michuacanos DelNorte Mariachi Band	The Barracks

Saturday, September 24

10:00 am	Sonoma Swing	Amphitheatre
	Sonoma State Chamber Singers	S.E. Plaza
11:00 am	Blessing of the Grapes	The Mission
11:30 a.m.	Bear Flag Revolt	N.E. Plaza
12:00 noon	Grape Stomp	Amphitheatre
12:15 pm	John Lytle	N.W. Plaza
	Dalila	S.E. Plaza
1:00 pm	Vallejo-Haraszthy Wedding	The Mission
1:30 pm	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
2:00 pm	Childrens' Parade	From Hughes Field down 1st St. East up Spain to 1st St. West back to Depot Park West
3:00 pm	Schellville Southside Blues Band	Amphitheatre
	Lenny Anderson	N.W. Plaza
	Dr. Now	S.W. Plaza
	Eye of the Pyramid (Mid-Eastern Folk Dancing)	S.E. Plaza
4:00 pm	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
	Beats Workin'	S.W. Plaza
	Sonoma State Chamber Singers	N.E. Plaza
	Jim Fyffe	S.E. Plaza
	Peter Greenwood	Mission Chapel
9:00 pm-1:00 am	Annual Vintage Ball with music by the J. H. Forties Band	Veterans' Memorial Building

Mule-drawn wagon rides

There will be a mule-drawn wagon ride around the Plaza both Saturday and Sunday. The wagon will pick up its passengers at the northeast corner of the Plaza for a ride around the square. The wagon will operate from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are 75 cents per person.

OGRAM

7th Annual
Moon Vintage Festival

Unscheduled performances on both Saturday and Sunday in the Plaza will include those by Jean-Paul Valjean (object balancer/juggler/escape artist), and Shane Grayson (oldtime cowboy singer-/songwriter). Additional surprises may also be in the offing from entertainment signed up since this program was printed.

Sunday, September 25

8:00 am	6th Annual Vintage Run	Sebastinai Vineyards Parking Lot
10:00 am	Seven Flags of Sonoma (written by Ruth Akin)	Trinity Episcopal Church, 275 E. Spain St.
11:30 am	Uncalled Upons	N.W. Plaza
	Sonoma Swing	S.W. Plaza
	Sonoma State Chamber Singers	S.E. Plaza
12:00 noon	Grape Stomp	Amphitheatre
12:15 pm	John Lytle	N.W. Plaza
	Dalila	S.W. Plaza
	Jim Fyffe	S.E. Plaza
12:30 pm	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
1:00 pm	Vallejo-Harazsthy Wedding	The Mission
1:15 pm	Decisions	Amphitheatre
	Lenny Anderson	N.W. Plaza
	Dr. Now	S.W. Plaza
	Greco Accordion Ensemble	N.E. Plaza
	Sonoma State Chamber Singers	S.E. Plaza
1:30 pm	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
2:00 pm	Vintage Festival Parade	E., S., & W. side of Plaza & 1st St. West to Depot
4:00 pm	Fireman's Water Fight	Spain St., No. side of Plaza
	Tombstone Express	No. of City Hall
	Rudy Downey & the Kansas City Special	Amphitheatre
	Beats Workin'	S.W. Plaza
	East Bay Banjo Band	S.E. Plaza
	Peter Greenwood	Mission Chapel

Window display contest

A free map of businesses participating in the annual Vintage Festival window display contest is available in the plaza at the Information Booth during the two-day festival. A perpetual plaque is awarded for the very best of all window displays, with ribbons going to outstanding windows in the various categories which include: Historical (a) Individual or (b) Group or antique shop; Indian or Commercial—in which the participating business creates a window decor showing how that particular business would have looked 100 years ago.

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•Tourist Books
•Gift items
•Old soda fountain

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Invited to be honored guests at the Vintage Festival's Blessing of the Grapes on Saturday are President Ronald Reagan, U.S. Senators Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson, Governor George Deukmejian, Congressman Doug Bosco, State Senator Jim Nielsen, Assemblyman Don Sebastiani, Sonoma County First District Supervisor Bob Adams, Mayor of Sonoma Henry Riboni, Jr., and Sonoma's nine Honorary Alcaldes–Henri Maysonnave, August Pinelli, Jerry Casson, Robert M. Lynch, Dan Ruggles, Dr. Paul and Mrs. Adele Harrison, Gail Fehrensen and the current Alcalde, Chet Sharek.

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Vintage Ball Saturday

Saturday, Sept. 24 at the Sonoma Valley Veterans' Memorial Building from 9 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Featuring the J-R Forties Band playing the sounds of the Dorsey Brothers and Glenn Miller. There will be a no-host bar. Prizes for the best costumes although costumes are not required. Tickets are $15 per couple and will be available at the door.

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Kids' parade Saturday

The second annual Children's Parade will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Starting at Hughes Field the parade will proceed down First St. east, west on Spain Street and up First St. west. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories.

Parade volunteers this year are: Tom Stahlbaum, Tom Honey, Oneita Alberda, Al Alberda, Shari Stahlbaum, Jeni Stahlbaum, Elizabeth Dunaway, Jerris Ray Dunaway, Charles T. Walter, Barbara Berthinier, Robert Evans, Charles Cook.

Judges for the parade: Mr. and Mrs. Michael La Porte, President, Electrical Specialty Company, South San Francisco, Ca.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Koffler, President & General Manager, Benkiser Electric, San Leandro; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ortega, President, East Bay Electric Motors, Oakland.

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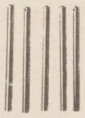

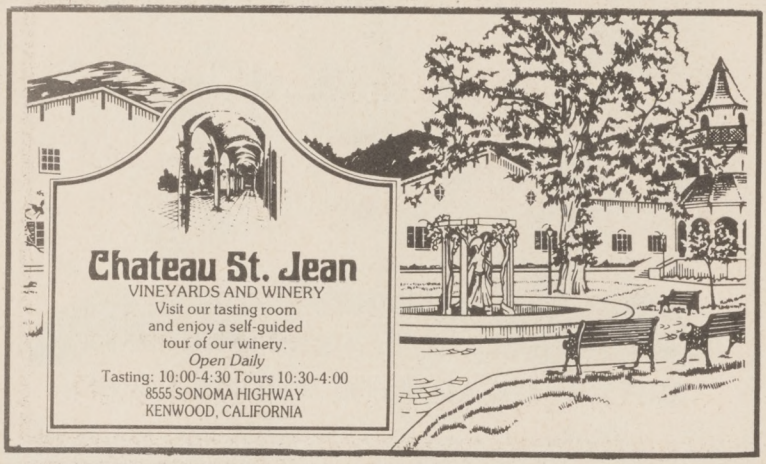

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Sunday's old-fashioned parade

One of the Vintage Festival highlights is the old-fashioned Parade, which will take place around three sides of the Plaza on Sunday, beginning at 2 p.m. Just find a spot anywhere on the east, west and south side of the Plaza and you'll have a front row seat along the line of march. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories.

They chair the events

Blessing of the Grapes
Dennis O'Neil
Parade
Jim Hyde and John Fintel
Costumes
Claudia Morris
Window Displays
Karla Hyde
Wine Tasting
Bev and Jack Babb
Wells Horton
Children's Parade
Barbara Stahlbaum and
Mary Pat Honey
Booths
Bob Petersen and
John Meserve
Patrons
Pete Atkin
Wedding
Nancylee Woodward
Entertainment
Beth Cramer
Spring Dance
Karla Hyde
Vacation of a Lifetime
Pete Atkin
Public Relations
Beth Cramer,
Tom Michelis,
Judy Wing
Vintage Ball
Karla Hyde
Hospitality
Pat Goin

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1948 Daniel Ruggles
1949 August Pinelli
*1950 Armand Franquelin
*1951 Mrs. Orson Linn
*1952 Howard Blank
*1953 Charles Cochran
*1954 Carolyn Wolfe
*1955 Harry Phinney
*1956 E.L. Richardson
1957 Esther Pagani Gowans
1958 Esther Pagani Gowans
*1959 Col. J.V. Thebaud
*1960 Edgar Waite
*1961 Louis Vela
1962 Hudson Auberlin
1963 R.H. "Bob" Brown
1964 Ray Sampson
1965 George Powell
1966 Robert Cannard
1967 Henri Maysonnave
1968 Dr. Allan Querin
1969 Jack Adams
1970 Col. Paul Walker
1971 Col. Paul Walker
1972 Merlyn Hunter
1973 Dr. Ralph Kelly
1974 Sue Stanley
1975 Toni Schaffner
1976 Elaine Sheffer
1977 Dorene Musilli
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1979 Frank Cummings
1980 Evan Ross
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1983 Vintage Festival Patrons

THE BELOW listing of 1983 Vintage Festival Patrons includes only those whose patron memberships were received before the Sonoma Valley Magazine went to press earlier this month. The names of those who became patrons since Sept. 8 will appear in future issues of The Sonoma Index-Tribune:

Al & Oneita Alberda
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Jeffrey Walter
Mr. & Mrs. Emil Weiler
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Parade judges

Judges for the Vintage Parade on Sunday are: John Stinnett, Bernie Jorgensen, Dennis O'Hare, Bob Safreno, Evelyn Holt, Dan Daniely, Chet Rhodes, and Harry Wezlowski.

Bear Flag

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

Republic" painted beneath.

There were shouts of joy as the Bear Flag was raised over Sonoma's plaza and the soldiers of the new republic took possession of the town.

Captain Fremont and Kit Carson rode into Sonoma a few nights later to reinforce the Bear Flag party, and after routing Mexican troops in the vicinity of San Rafael, returned to celebrate the Fourth of July on Sonoma's plaza.

BESIDES FREMONT and his men and the Bear Flag contingent, there were officers and sailors from United States ships anchored in San Francisco Bay; and, strange to say, many pioneer women, for women were scarce in those days in California.

But all the families for miles around had been concentrated at Sonoma for protection after the seizure of the town, in fear of Mexixcan reprisal. With Fremont and his reinforcements in Sonoma it was deemed safe enough to have a grand Fourth of July ball, so to the tune of squeaky fiddles and by the light of flickering lanterns, the covered wagon girls and the men of the new republic danced throughout the night at the big adobe of Salvador Vallejo, on the west side of Sonoma's plaza. As the Fourth dawned, salutes were fired from Mexican cannon in honor of our Independence Day.

On July 9, 1846, after word had been received that the American flag had gone up at the capital, Monterey, Lieutenant Joseph Warren Revere, U. S. Navy (relative of the famous Paul Revere) arrived from the frigate "Portsmouth" with an American flag for Sonoma, and raised the Stars and Stripes over the plaza.

As he pulled down the crude Bear Flag, he remarked, "This emblem is worth saving." That original flag was finally presented to the Society of California Pioneers and was one of their valued relics until destroyed by fire in 1906, the year of San Francisco's major earthquake.

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London Ranch

Famed author's grandnephew is vineyardist

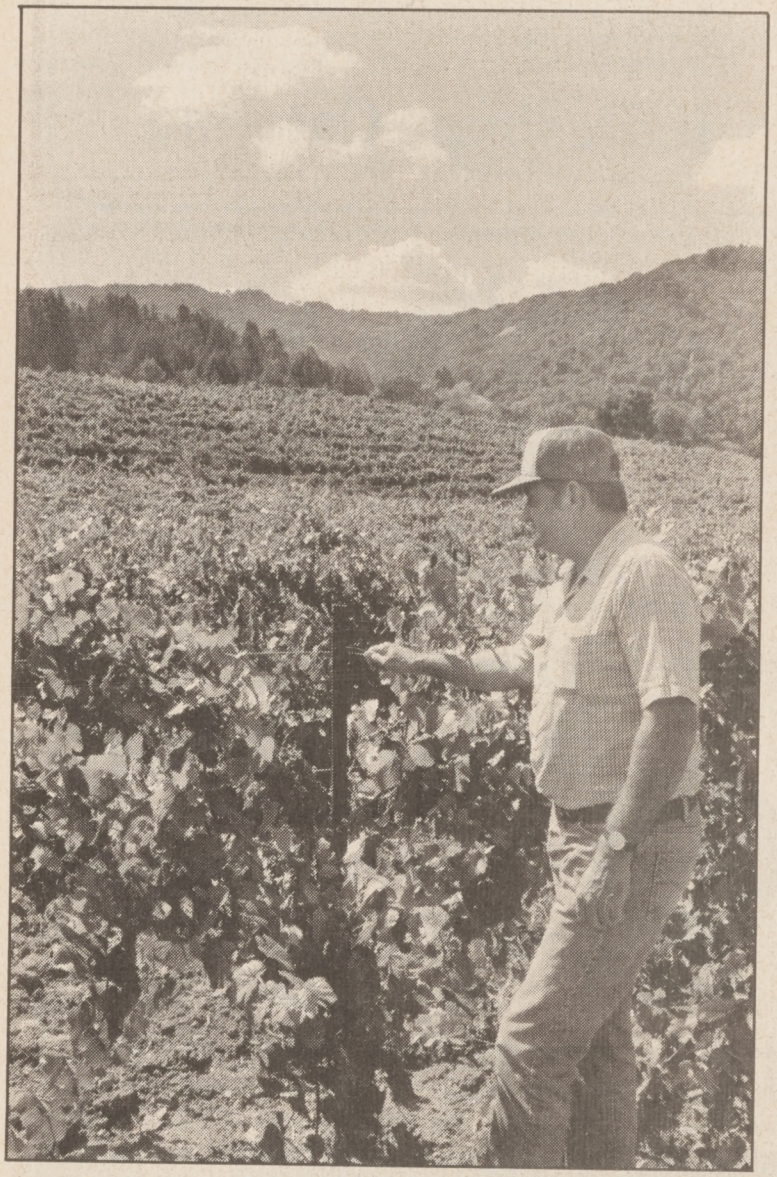

Photo by John Lynch

MILO SHEPARD'S JACK LONDON RANCH
Brings award-winning wines to Kenwood Vineyards

By JERRY PARKER

Milo Shepard, who grows grapes on the Jack London ranch in Glen Ellen--he is London's grandnephew--has both good and bad news for wine drinkers in California.

His good news is for the wine connoisseurs, those who can afford to buy wines that cost $10-$15 a bottle. He sees a new era of cooperation between grape growers and winery owners which will make these blends better than ever.

The bad news is for winos everywhere. He believes there will be only two or three jug wineries left in the U.S. in 10 years. The jug wine market is just not lucrative enough, he asserted, as he was interviewed at his home recently.

Shepard is also an unabashed chauvinist about local grapes. "Sonoma Valley probably grows the best red grapes in the United States", he boasted.

Cooperation between grape growers and wine makers will be fostered by the new Sonoma County Grape Growers Association, of which Shepard was one of the founders. Officers for the group are yet to be chosen and by laws have to be written.

The husky, 58-year-old vineyardist sees his association with Kenwood Vineyards as perhaps a model for the new breed of grape growers. Kenwood buys all of his grapes each year. This is due in good part to the fact Shepard has been guided by the winery's recommendations in putting in his grapes.

HIS VARIETIES include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Gewurztraminer and Chardonnay. His vineyards cover 110 acres.

"I have small plantings", said Shepard. "Kenwood wants to market 4,000 cases, not 10,000. And I get four tons to the acre, instead of the eight to 10 some growers get. Pruning maintains my tonnage. With lower production you can be selective and the wineries can start sooner. The less you do to a grape the better".

Shepard first marketed his grapes in 1976. He started to grow them in 1971, with the aid of his father, the late Irving Shepard, London's nephew.

The soft-spoken, confident rancher operates the Jack London ranch--he is general manager and a trustee--as part of what is known as the Irving Shepard Trust. His two sisters,

TURN TO PAGE 90

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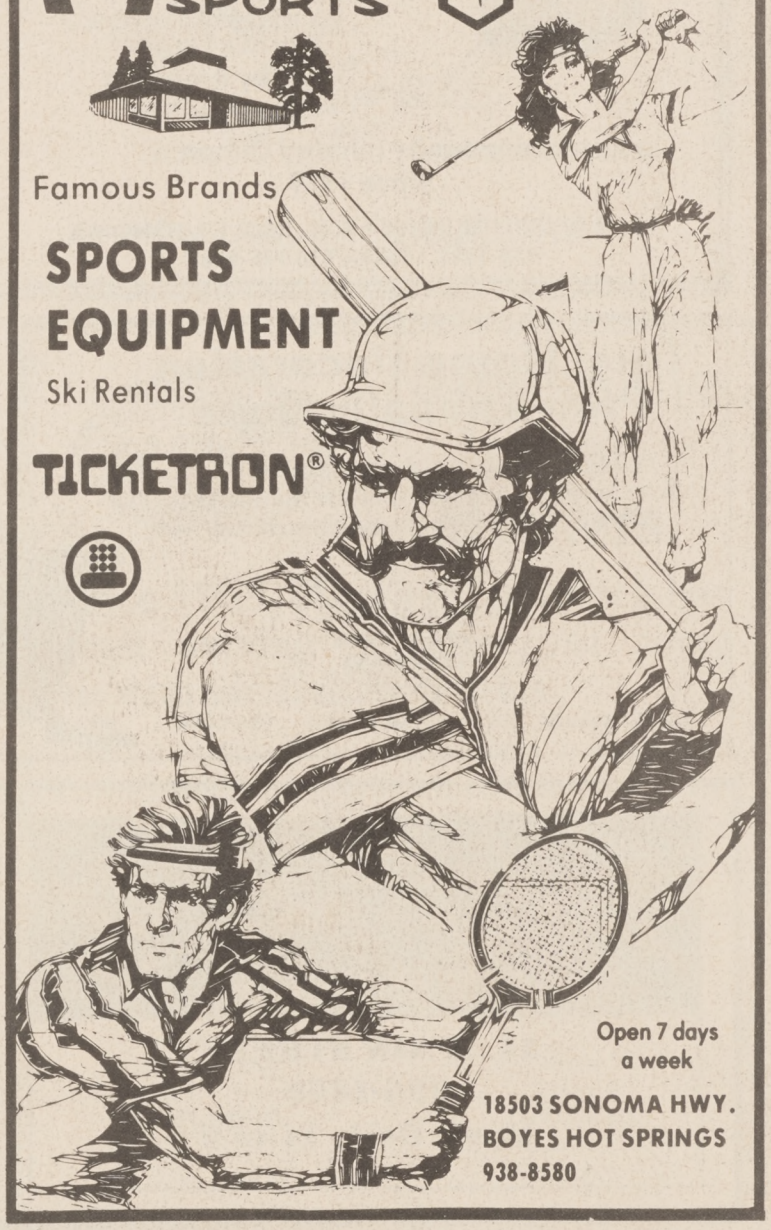

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Kunde

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

will show the soil Kunde is so proud of.

On the east side of Hwy. 12 between the historic Beltane Ranch and Kenwood, the Kunde vineyards are in measured lines over the steep hills, the red clay earth in a sharp contrast to the lush green of the vines.

The rocky crag of Mt. Hood and the black face of Sugarloaf form the backdrop for the climbing rows. To call Wildwood and Kinneybrook picturesque is a gross understatement. Beautiful is more like it.

The sight of the green vineyards took even Bob Kunde's breath away when he flew over his property for the first time.

"I was suprised at our vineyards and how green they were compared to the rest of the valley," he remembered.

So surprised and impressed, in fact, that he told Sam Sebastiani he ought to go up and take a look. Sebastiani did, and now he brings marketing and sales representatives to tour the ranch on land and from the air during meetings.

The vineyards on the hills behind Wildwood were even a setting for a scene in the TV series "Falcon Crest" last year.

Some 13 wardrobe and dressing-room trailors were hauled up into a hilltop knoll invisible from the highway, where the cast and crew filmed a graveyard scene (complete with stageprop tombstones) beneath a grove of oak trees surrounded by vineyards. The Kundes were not starstruck by the proceedings.

"Everyone was saying 'You have to go up there and meet that what's-her-name — Jane Wyman,' you know" Bob Kunde said with a smile. "But I just said naaaah; I went to work putting in more vines."

KUNDE'S PRIDE in his grapes shows when he's talking about his work, and about the wine industry of the valley in general. "Sonoma County grapes are a lot finer (than the rest of the state's) — you can see it in the wine tasting," he said as he drove out to check a hilltop vineyard. "We have a lot of cellars that we didn't have before; Sonoma County's getting all the gold medals."

The quality of the county grapes may just save the local vineyard owners from the current grape glut and price deflation, Kunde said. "Our surplus of grapes won't effect Sonoma County like it will the San Joaquin Valley — it's all quality up

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'But I just said naaaah; I went to work putting in more vines.'

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in this part of the country," he ventured.

Kunde, who is active in the California Wine and Grape Growers Association, thinks the key to the current wine-market woes is eliminating restrictions on the sale of wines in places in most states. In all but seven states, wine must be sold in a licensed liquor store instead of a grocery store, he said.

"Studies showed that wine consumption jumped a hundred percent when you could buy wine in a grocery store," he said. "A housewife's not going to run all the way across town to a government (licensed) house when she's grocery shopping."

The restrictive laws are hurting the wine grape growers more than competition from imported wines, he explained. "If we could get that (law) changed, you probably couldn't grow enough grapes in the state" to keep up with demand, Kunde said, adding "I don't think foreign competition would be a problem then."

THE KUNDE vineyards yield an average of four tons per acre, compared to the 17 ton per acre average in the heavily fertilized and irrigated San Joaquin Valley. But the Kundes are aiming for quality, not quantity.

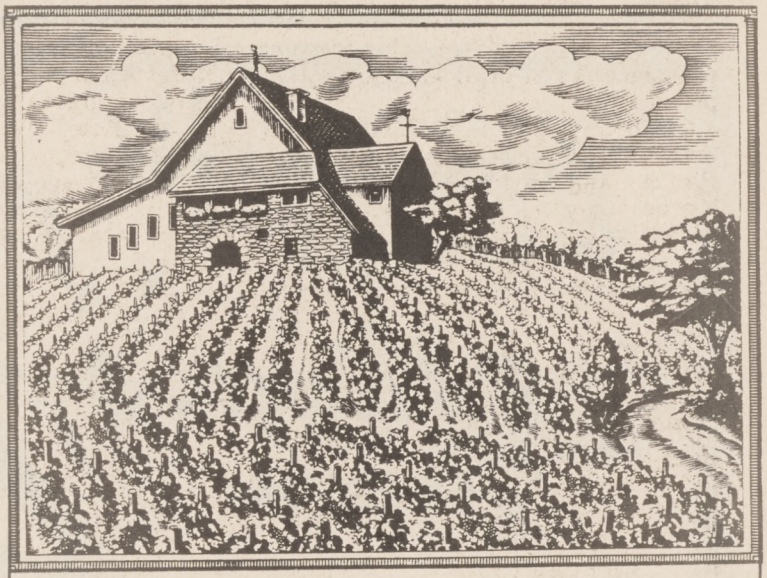
"All the grapes on these hills are non-irrigated; that gives us a little more quality,"Kunde stressed. The family ploughs-under the rows betweeen the vines in March every year to preserve the moisture of the soil and provide a nurturing humus for the vines.

The only "irrigation" the Kundes use on their vineyards is the light spray required every once and a while in their flatland vineyards to prevent frost damage.

"We just preserve the moisture nature gives us," Kunde explained about the dry-farming method.

The advice Kunde had for people wanting to get into the wine grape growing business was simple: have a lot of

TURN TO PAGE 60



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

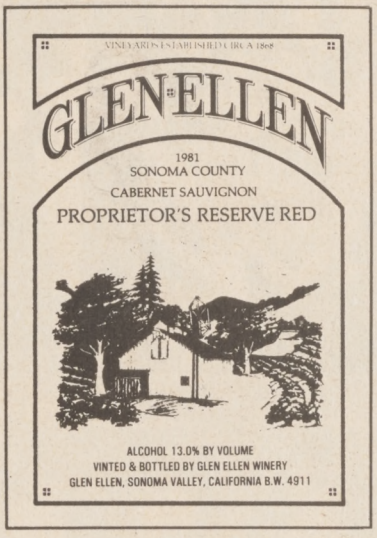
money on hand.

"Right now it's really hard to get into the grape business unless yo've got a lot of backing. Bare land is worth, what, $10,-000 an acre now, I guess."

'I see the red wines as the market of the future.'

But there is a good future ahead for the wine market, he stressed. "There is a little slack and overproduction right now, but I see a trend four to five years down the road—the grape business will be good due to the growing popularity of wine."

Unlike some people in the in-



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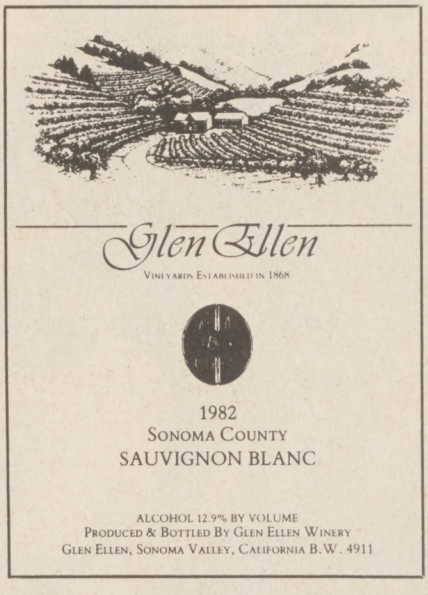

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dustry, Kunde is certain that the wine boom is not a bust yet. Young people especially are developing a taste for wine, and that's where the future of the industry lies, he said.

"A wine drinker usually starts out on really sweet wine, then gradually cultivates a taste for quality wine," he explained.

"The trend now is for white wine, but I see the red wines as the market of the future. Red wine just has more flavor, more body, quality, the whole bit."

Whatever the market trend is for the future, it seems to be a safe bet that the Kundes and Wildwood will be prepared for it.

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Vallejo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

cho (now a state landmark), consisted of 66,622 acres, and was granted to him in two parcels. One section was presented him in 1834 by Governor Figueroa and the other in 1844 by Governor Micheltorena.

At the Petaluma Rancho he conducted a vast operation, involving the growing of grains, fruits and vegetables. Hides and tallow were produced abundantly and the Indians worked the fields and rode as vaqueros. The residence was a handsome two-story adobe building.

VALLEJO'S FIRST HOME in Sonoma, the Casa Grande, faced the plaza and was built in 1835. The servants' quarters of that residence are still preserved here. His second home, Lachryma Montis (Latin for "Tear of the Mountain") was built a mile northwest of the plaza. The site was chosen for the abundant spring on the mountainside which developed his estate of some 300 acres into a showplace of California.

Here he lived for almost 40 years and upon his death in 1890 he was buried in Mountain Cemetery overlooking his beloved estate.

Although Vallejo was loyal to his Mexican superiors, he was beset by dissensions among his own people and by agents of foreign governments who wanted to get a foothold in California.

On the morning of June 14, 1846, 33 American settlers on the suggestion of Captain John C. Fremont made a political prisoner of Vallejo. The group known as "The Bears" seemed totally unaware that Vallejo had advocated, 10 weeks before, the annexation of California to the United States.

They raised the Bear Flag, declared a new "California Republic" and kept Vallejo a prisoner at Sutter's Fort 48 days--23 while the Bear Flag was flying over Sonoma Plaza and 25 days under the American Flag during the military occupation.

On July 7 the American Flag was raised in Monterey and on the 9th at San Francisco and Sonoma by American military officials. Orders were given for Vallejo's release and he was freed August 2, 1846.

VALLEJO ENTHUSIASTICALLY embraced the cause of the United States. He served as one of the eight California members to the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in September, 1849 and was the first State Senator from Sonoma County. Through his efforts the State Capital was located from 1851 to 1853 in Vallejo, a city named for him.

The state capital had moved from San Jose to Vallejo, to Sacramento, then back to Vallejo before it settle briefly, in 1853, in Benicia--eventually being moved to its permanent site in Sacramento.

Upon leaving the State Legislature, Vallejo accepted membership on the Sonoma City Council on May 4, 1851.

Lachryma Montis, now the Vallejo Home State Monument, is located at West Spain st. and Third st. west in Sonoma, and is open to the public from 10 to 5 daily.

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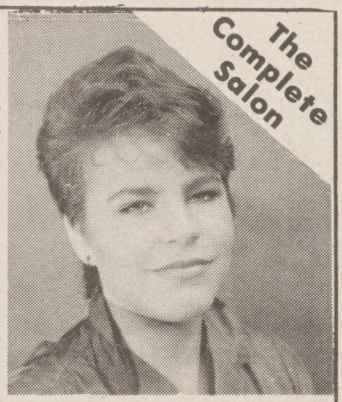

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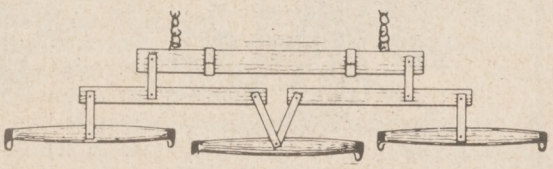

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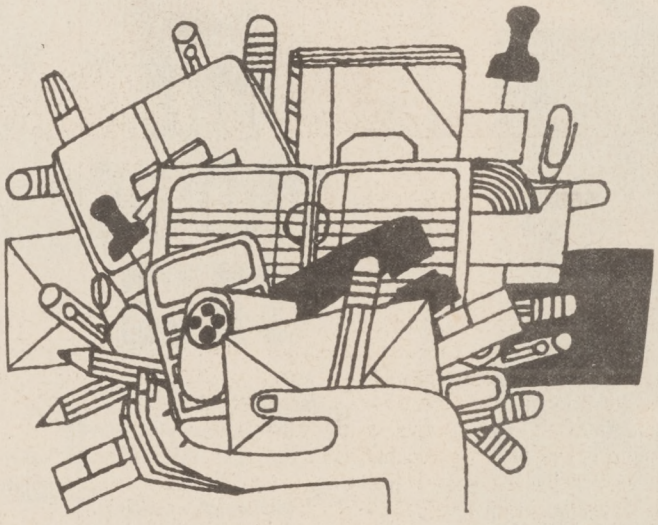

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David DiPiero

Watching over 500 acres of grapes

EDITOR'S NOTE: (Herbert Cerwin is a long-time Sonoma Valley resident who, for a number of years, has worked in the area of public relations for Sebastiani Vineyards. His firm, Herbert Cerwin & Associates, is based on Post street in San Francisco.)

By HERBERT CERWIN

A vineyard needs as much attention, perhaps even more so, than the making of wine. I know because we have owned a small vineyard in Sonoma Valley for many years and are always aware of the demands.

Proper care of the vineyard and of the grapes is a full time job. One of the most qualified vineyardist ranch managers in the area is David DiPiero. Throughout the year, DiPiero looks after more than 500 acres of varietal grapes for Sebastiani Vineyards.

Almost daily, vineyards offer challenges that require know how. Of Italian descent DiPiero has the background for working in vineyards and watching over them. He has been wedded to agriculture since he was a youngster in Healdsburg.

"We always had a vegetable garden and I learned watching my Dad," he recalls. "Then I became interested in vineyard work when my Dad worked for Louis Martini."

He says he finds it difficult to understand why students during summer vacation show no interest in agricultural work.

"THERE'S SUCH great satisfaction in planting and seeing things grow; from working with a shovel I eventually learned to run a tractor.

"By the time it came to work for Sebastiani as ranch foreman in 1974, I was experienced in vineyard work. But you know," he says with a smile, "one is always learning. I learned a lot from August Sebastini and later from Sam."

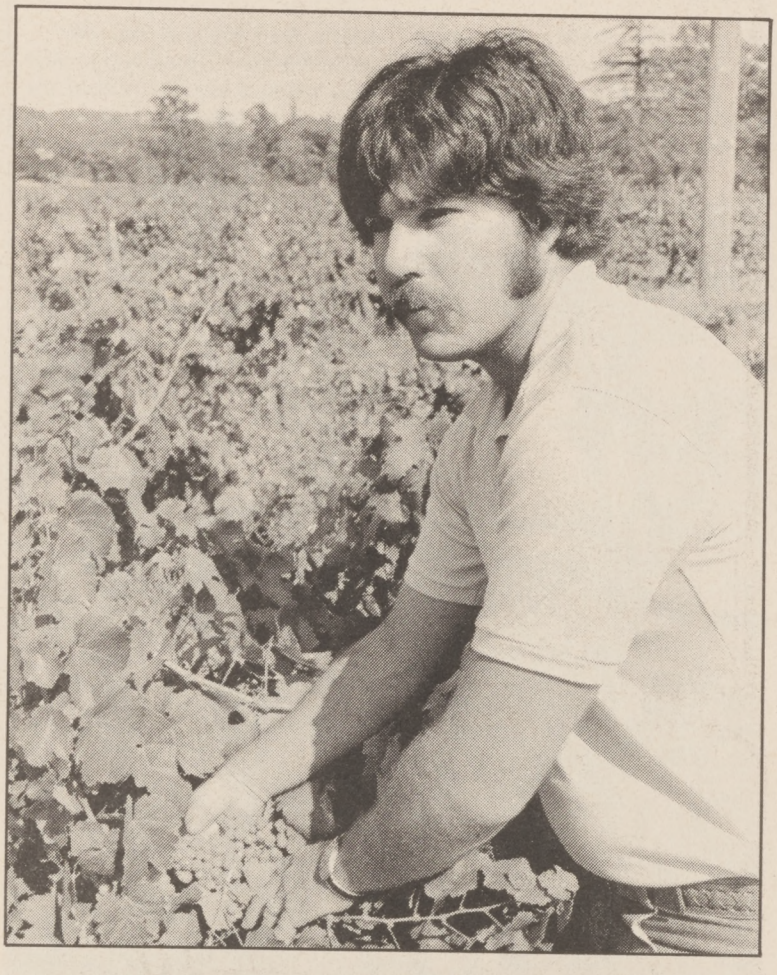

Photo by John Lynch

SEBASTIANI VINEYARDS' DAVID DI PIERO
'A vineyard needs great attention'

He points out that few people realize that raising grapes and taking care of a vineyard is not like raising hay or even vegetables. "A vineyard needs great attention."

There are two critical periods in a vineyard, according to DiPiero.

The most critical period is pruning, which usually begins in December and goes on through late February or early March. "If the pruning is not done correctly, the vineyard may produce a lot of grapes that year, and the following year virtually very little. Proper pruning is vital in a vineyard."

ONCE THE vineyards are in bloom and have young grapes, there's always danger of frost. At Sebastiani, there is a transmitter which is set at 35 degrees. The moment the temperature begins to drop, DiPiero is awakened by an alarm from the transmitter. And off he rushes to turn on

TURN TO PAGE 76

Alta Vista Ranch

Grant and Ginny Fletcher grow wine grapes on

Photo by Bob Lynch

GINNY AND GRANT FLETCHER
Checking the grapevines at Alta Vista Ranch.

By BOB LYNCH

Grant and Ginny Fletcher live in another world and it's less than five miles from Sonoma Plaza.

They grow grapes for a living on Alta Vista Ranch, at the end of Gehricke road, a thousand feet up from the floor of the valley in indescribably beautiful surroundings encompassing some 1,100 acres.

They didn't always do this. Grant, a graduate of Sonoma Valley High School and Stanford Medical School, practiced medicine in Sonoma until 1952, in Monterey until 1963 and then as Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at Stanford.

But the memories and lure of the Sonoma beauty ranch of his boyhood, and the fact that his mother, the late Inez Ettelson, was getting along in years, had much to do with Dr. Fletcher and wife, Ginny, returning "home" 11 years ago.

Mrs. Ettelson, a strong, independent woman, with a keen mind, loved the ranch she efficiently managed and was very much a part of its various agribusiness pursuits over the years, even when she was in her 80's. She died in July of last year at the age of 89.

ALTA VISTA RANCH was the Otto Gehricke property of some 540 acres back in 1873. It remained in the Gehricke family until 1935 when it was purchased by Inez and Lee Ettelson. Mr. Ettelson was then editor of the San Francisco Examiner.

The Ettelsons came here from Palo Alto with their five children to make their home on the rugged and beautiful hilltop acreage. One of those children was Grant Fletcher, Mrs. Ettelson's son by a previous marriage.

From the mid-1930s until World War II, the Ettelsons were engaged in turkey raising, but abandoned this pursuit when it became financially unsound.

Subsequently, a dairy herd of milking shorthorns was developed, and in the late 1940s was replaced by a herd of registered Black Angus cattle. The last of the Angus were sold off in 1978.

ALTHOUGH THE GEHRICKES had a small vineyard of Zinfandel grapes on the ranch in the late 1890s, more than half a century was to pass before the next planting of

historic acreage high atop Gehricke road

grape vines on the historic acreage.

It was during the period of 1963 to 1965 that Mrs. Ettelson, then divorced from her journalist husband, planted 3½ acres of Gewurztraminer vines.

Grant Fletcher recalls that this represented about 80 percent of all the Gewurztraminer grapes in Sonoma County at the time. "Not many people around here knew much about them at the time," Fletcher said.

Ginny chimed in "It was Mom's (Mrs. Ettelson's) idea. She was a romanticist and remembered that some of her ancestors grew Gewurztraminer grapes in the Austrian Alps."

Grant said that his mother had checked with UC, Davis and they had assured her that that grape variety would do well here. The 3½-acres still yield a small but high quality crop of grapes each fall.

Impressed with the success of Mrs. Ettelson's vineyard project, and the growing demand for white wines, Grant and Ginny in 1972 started planting 18 acres at the ranch with Gewurztraminer vines in the same acreage Otto Gehricke had grown his few Zinfandel grapes and had a sizeable prune orchard.

"We did it in stages. Ginny and I worked side by side. Mom did her part. Our sons and other young members of the family assisted, and it was pretty much a family operation. We finally completed the planting in 1977," Fletcher said.

Clearing of land nearby for a Zinfandel vineyard was begun in 1979, the final planting being completed in 1982.

THE 40 ACRES PLUS of vineyard is "dry farmed," their only irrigation coming from natural precipitation.

"We feel it is the best utilization of the land," said Fletcher. He indicated that a dairy operation and running beef cattle was not practical for the isolated spot, and that "it was the wrong terrain" for turkeys.

The soil utilized for vineyards varies from cobbly and stoney to some deep loams, and it produces top quality Gewurztraminer grapes, slightly more than four tons per acre.

The cooler climatic conditions of Alta Vista Ranch, like most of the Sonoma Valley and lower Napa Valley, are ideal for producing quality grapes, Fletcher said. He also cited superior soil and, with a smile added, "and excellent management, of course!"

Grant said there is an old saying, "To produce good wine the vine must suffer," noting that some of the very best wines come off hillsides not producing many grapes to the acre.

He said the exposure to the bay (easily visible from the ranch on any clear day) plays a role in the cool temperatures and allows the acids in the grapes to be maintained to control quality of fermentation.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN that the Sonoma and Napa Valleys are ideal for certain grapes with their climatic conditions, although yields are comparatively light compared to those grapes grown in warmer regions.

"The pattern today is an emphasis on quality grapes, and the wineries are very selective," Fletcher stated. "We keep in contact with the enologists year-around," he said.

"They come up and walk though the vineyards, sampling and testing for sugar. We try to give them what they want," said Fletcher, who sells all of Alta Vista Ranch's grapes to the Sebastiani and Hacienda wineries.

'The memories and lure of the Sonoma beauty ranch of his boyhood had much to do with Dr. Fletcher and wife, Ginny, returning home 11 years ago.'

Grant and Ginny Fletcher agree that Sonoma Valley produces as many superb wines from its grapes as do wineries using grapes grown in the cooler regions of the Napa Valley. "I don't see any difference in the quality," said Grant.

"Napa Valley gets more recognition because it has more wineries--100 plus to Sonoma Valley's 19. We are among vineyardists working to gain more recognition for our wines in a promotional way, joining with others in a growers' divi-

TURN TO PAGE 74

Phil Coturri

Sonoma Valley grape grower uses imagination,

By JOHN LYNCH

To Phil Coturri, the satisfaction gained from farming rugged, dry, hillside vineyards around Sonoma Valley takes on many forms. There are the magnificent views of the valley below, the peace and quiet of working alone along the slopes and ravines, the security of being out of the frost belt, not to mention the outstanding quality of fruit that can be produced in the shallow and usually marginal soil types indigenous to hillside locations.

Or, as he put it succinctly, "It's fun being out on the tractor and seeing the buzzards below you," or "the effect of the foggy mornings and being *above* the fog."

'It's fun being out on the tractor and seeing the buzzards below you'

Exercising imagination is an important part of this 30-year-old grape grower's life, an occupation he's been actively involved in since the age of 14. He and his family established H. Coturri & Sons Winery near Glen Ellen with the idea of completely deviating from accepted and conventional wine making practices. They developed their own style, doing everything *naturally* without the use of any chemicals and allowing the wine to undergo natural yeast fermentation in the barrel, and thus, bypass the use of tank fermentation.

They "dared to be different" and have taken their lumps because of it. Other small wineries of course have struggled too during the economic rut and relatively flat and highly competitive wine and wine grape market.

But Coturri firmly believes that these somewhat shaky and uncertain times for winegrowers and wine makers might actually prove to be a healthy experience for both. It will force the wine maker to develop his own unique style, his own identity, he says, or the grower to be more imaginative in selecting which particular varieties to plant in a given microclimate. He belives it could inspire Sonoma Valley growers and vintners to rally even more image-building ammo, as it were, in an effort to further promote the area.

All with a little imagination, of course.

COTURRI articulates well his feelings about the state of the industry and the challenge of farming hillside vineyards. He's also a genial host. He was kind enough to pour a glass or two of a delightful 1981 Coturri Chardonnay, and leave a rather large, imposing, albeit dead rattlesnake lying beside the door of my truck (Thanks, Phil. The horrible screams can still be heard reverberating off the Lovall Valley hillsides).

Coturri, a bearded, grinning, easy-going sort, has operated his own viticultural service here since 1978 and farms a total of 150 acres of vineyards throughout Sonoma Valley, mostly separate parcels of 30-40 acres. He manages the vineyards owned by Tom Smothers in Kenwood, a ranch up in Sobre Vista near Glen Ellen as well as the hillside acreages established on the Admiral Cook Ranch on the east of the valley, where he and his wife, Arden, and three-month-old son, Samuel, live.

He's also been hired to farm some 80 acres of new vineyards now being established by a New York screenwriter off Norrbom road just above Sonoma.

Coturri and a full-time crew comprised of 10-12 men perform the pruning, picking and other labor, and provide equipment and machinery.

"WE STICK with hillside developments," Coturri states. "We want to keep with that high quality."

He resorts to irrigation only to propagate the vines. But once they're producing fruit, the watering ceases and the grapes are strictly dry farmed. Dry farming brings a light crop, but one of generally excellent quality.

"The key to a good wine is consistency in the vineyards and quality of the grapes," he explained.

Mountain slopes form different microclimates even around one particular area, making it all the more important to select the right variety of grape for the right location, he notes. Ground with an eastern exposure might be planted in Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, perhaps Sauvignon Blanc. For a western exposure, the heavier, har-

diligence in farming hillside vineyards

Photo by John Lynch

WORKING THE DRY FARM, HILLSIDE VINEYARDS
An imaginative challenge for Phil Coturri

dier red varieties that can tolerate a lot of sunlight might be selected, like Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel or Merlot.

Soil types, likewise, vary in hillside settings, from the rocky, yet crumbly vanilla-colored volcanic pumice that dominates the Cook ranch Zinfandel vineyard, to the sandier, more red-colored, iron-rich variety found in Smothers' Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc acreages.

THE RUGGED terrain and sometimes demon, rock-hard soils not only take their toll on the body but on machinery as well. "Equipment that's supposed to last five years will last two," Coturri said, with a shrug.

The toughest challenge to the hillside vineyard grower is getting the land laid out, the terracing completed, putting it all together and being able to establish adequate erosion control and solve drainage problems.

Dealing with deer, birds, rodents, rabbits, wild pigs and keeping them from running amok with the fruit or damaging the vines provides a constant challenge to the mountain grower. Rattlesnakes also present worker morale problems at times, it seems.

MORALE, trust, cooperation, and don't forget, imagination, are important elements in the relationship between winery and grower, Coturri points out, particularly now that both face a certain amount of economic uncertainty. "We're trying to get rid of the competition between the winery and grower," he stated. "That way, you're not putting the screws to each other."

One example of how the two parties are able to reach agreement in negotiating grape tonnage prices is by resorting to "bottle pricing." Coturri explained: "What they're doing is getting the bottle prices and have that reflect in prices for grapes. I see a lot more of it going on now."

For instance if a winery sells a bottle of Chardonnay for $12, the tonnage price offered to a Chardonnay grape grower is $1200 a ton; $6 a bottle, it's $600 a ton.

HE FEELS the so-called

TURN TO PAGE 84

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Robert Lawrence Balzer, Syndicated Wine Writer

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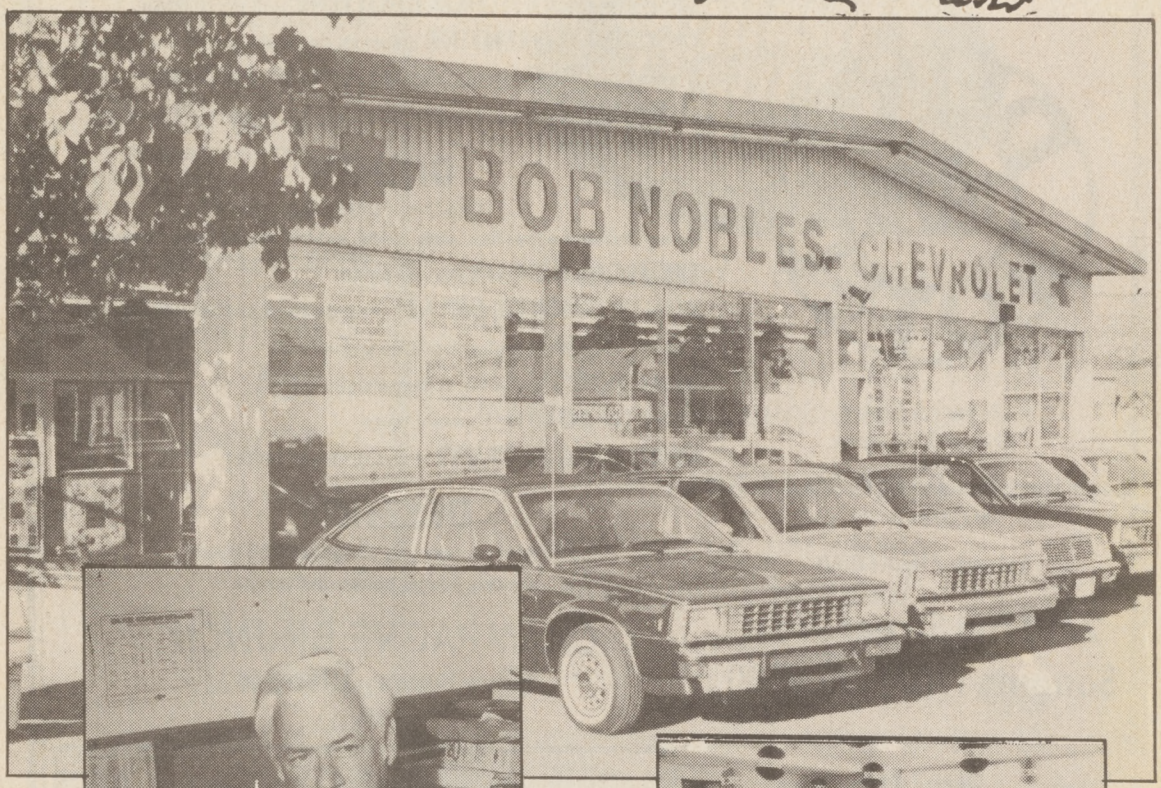

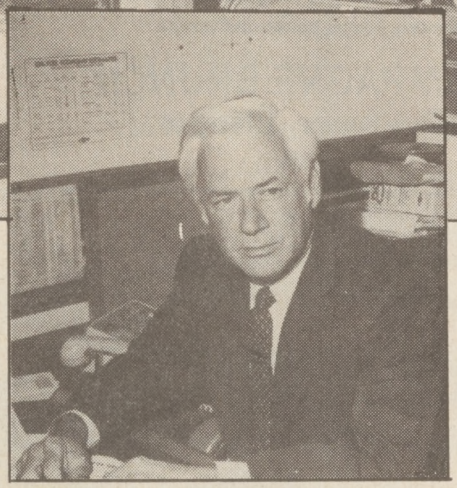

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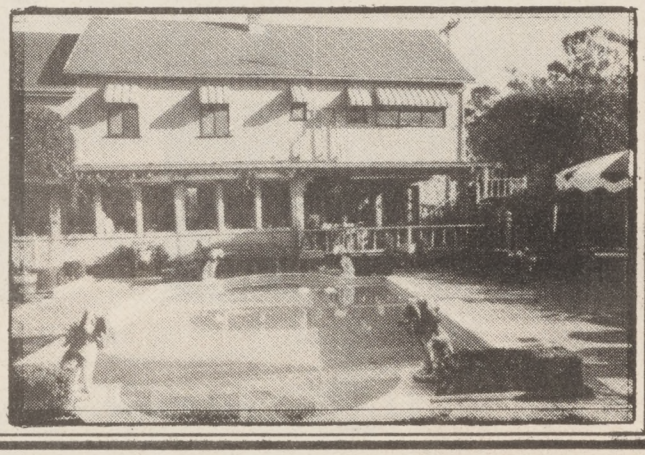

Alta Vista

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69

sion of the Sonoma Valley Vintners' Association," said Fletcher.

ASKED ABOUT PROBLEMS which plague grape growers, Grant and Ginny said they have had relatively few. Rainy weather, such as that experienced last year, is obviously a purveyor of problems. Their particular terrain is rugged, and it is difficult to farm and not allow it to erode away.

Last year the Fletchers started to prune right after Thanksgiving, and because of the rainy weather, did not finish until after February.

Frost is no problem, as the spring temperature at Alta Vista Ranch is usually four to nine degrees warmer than on the valley floor.

Problems can also be alleviated by having good, dependable labor. The Fletchers' son, Stephen, who speaks Spanish fluently, runs a crew of 22 pickers during harvest time. Alta Vista Ranch also pays top dollar for laborers who toil in the rough terrain.

Grant admits to being concerned about the abundance of imported wines flooding the market, even though he feels they can not compete with the premium wines of this area. He acknowledges it can affect the prices paid for grapes.

Overplanting of grapes also

relates to prices received by growers. Fletcher said prices for Sonoma Valley Gewurztraminergrapes hit the highest mark ever in 1973 when $1100 a ton was paid.

The following year, because of a grape glut, the price dropped to about $500 a ton. Last year the average was $650 a ton, Fletcher said.

Ripening of newly-planted vineyards and the recession combined to put prices down and, said Fletcher, "A lot of vineyards did not get picked."

He said the new appellation labeling places wines from the Sonoma and Napa Valleys in a more desirable light, and is advantageous to the local grower of quality grapes.

He said anyone considering starting a new vineyard today should "think twice. There are a lot of grapes out there." To this add the cost of purchasing land and installing a vineyard--a minimum of $12,000 an acre, according to Fletcher.

Right now, Grant and Ginny Fletcher have no plans of their own for expanding their vineyard operation on the family ranch.

It seems too bad. The vines and the Fletchers appear to have been meant for each other.

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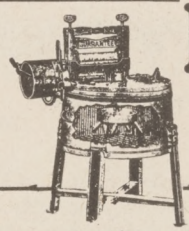

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Di Piero

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

sprinklers that will prevent a possible freeze.

Another critical period of a vineyard is the harvest. Grapes have to be picked at the right time, and brought to the winery at just the right time.

"There is a lot of anxiety in looking after a vineyard," he said. "The right amount of sugar is important but now so many other factors have to be taken into consideration. My boss, Sam Sebastiani, is a perfectionist and a stickler for quality. He knows, like I know, that it is the quality of the grapes, the proper pruning and harvesting at the right time that are essential to making a fine wine and that's always our main objective at Sebastiani.

'There is a lot of anxiety in looking after a vineyard'

DI PIERO lives with his wife and three children on the Wilson ranch which is on Sebastiani property. He likes to fish during the few weeks he can get away. His favorite wine is Sebastiani Proprietor's Reserve Barbera.

Dave is an affable, friendly man, as are almost all people who work and are close to the soil.

I like him, also, because he's keeping an eye on our vineyard and our grapes, (mostly Gewurztraminer), which go to Sebastiani as they have for many years.

Sebastiani is producing a fine Gewurztraminer. Only last evening at Sharl's Restaurant in Sonoma, we had a bottle of 1982 Sebastini Traminer with a delicately prepared filet of sole.

There's a dramatic flavor to a good Gewurz which Chardonnay lacks.

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Julius K. Rose

Mysterious pioneer Buena Vista vintner

By WILLIAM F. HEINTZ

There are few mysteries left to solve when it comes to the early history of Sonoma. Few places in the state have been researched so well or written about so often. This was the locale of the Bear Flag revolt, of course, and where the Jesuit Fathers established the last of the California Missions.

Within the past two years, however, the ghost of a mysterious stranger has returned to the town, demanding some recognition for his part in pioneering wine making in Sonoma and the founding of one of the state's most famous wineries, Buena Vista.

No one has seen the ghost of Julius K. Rose, Esq., please don't get confused about that. The ghost theory just seems one explanation for his name being discovered in dusty old newspapers after more than a century. Julius K. Rose was the owner of Buena Vista before it was acquired by that famous Hungarian Agoston Haraszthy.

It now seems certain that Rose will, at some future date, be credited in history books with the founding of the Buena Vista winery. This depends somewhat on "founder" being defined as the first person to make wine on the site, to construct the first winery thereon and begin use of the name.

This really all began with a story in the *California Farmer,* San Francisco, of Nov. 7, 1856 with the headline: "Sonoma Wine". The story reads in part: "At the Buena Vista Vineyards the wine is being made with great care..." The owner's name is not given but this does not really matter. The Haraszthys did not acquire Buena Vista until 1857–this date has long been associated with the Haraszthy name and Sonoma.

IF JULIUS K. ROSE was some insignificant character, it might be all right to ignore his historical contribution. He was, in his time, almost as important as Agoston.

On Dec. 5, 1853 a meeting was called in San Francisco to organize the first agricultural association in California. From this meeting came the "California State Agricultural Society", and for 60 years afterward it was the overseer of the state's agricultural industry.

Rose appears to have provided the inspiration for the Society for he chaired that first meeting. In the opening address given to those assembled, he spoke of the Society's goals and then named the committee to write its constitution. By unanimous vote of the committee, Rose was asked to participate, as well.

At the first agricultural fair held the same day in San Francisco, Julius Rose won the First Prize for Grapes. It was the first such award ever given and the grapes came from Rose's Sonoma vineyard which he had purchased in 1853, from Benjamin Kelsey.

The California Farmer, in the person of its editor, came to Sonoma in the spring of 1854 to see for himself, Rose's grape vines. The story in a June 29th issue concludes: "These orchards (and vines) are truly a wonderful sight, a more than half the fruit now on the trees should be removed to secure their ripening. A very pretty fortune in store from this orchard."

Rose grew many types of fruit trees, besides vines. He was particularly successful with apples and even figs.

Later in the fall of '54, Rose's Sonoma vineyard won the First Prize given by the State Agricultural Society for "Best Vineyard"!

IN THE REPORT of the Committee on Fruit of the Society's Annual Fair, these words of praise for Rose can be found:

"A splendid exhibition of California grapes was made by J.K. Rose, Esq. Sonoma. This fruit more resembles our fine Hamburg, than the native–large bunches, with heavy shoulder bunches, large full, well ripened berries, bearing a bright bloom. *This we esteem a point in the cultivator that is proof of a knowledge of the soil and climate. These were the finest native grapes shown uet in the country; Sonoma surely takes the lead."*

(If Agoston Haraszthy had read this story he would not have waited until 1857 to move here.)

The following year, 1855, a Visiting Committee of the State Agricultural Society visited Sonoma and noted in their Report that Rose's vineyard included 2000 old vines, planted 15 years earlier (1840) by Jacob Leese; and 8,000 young vines, all of which would yield 40,000 pounds of grapes. "Probably there is no better bearing vineyard in Northern California" added the Visiting Committee.

ROSE chaired the Committee on Dairy products for several years of the Agricultural Society, and gave out the prizes awarded in this category. He must have known something about dairying, as well as vines and orchards.

What year Rose made his first wine at Buena Vista, is not known precisely. Arpad Haraszthy, son of Agoston, wrote many years later that one of the attractions of Sonoma for his father was that he "had tasted some of the wine made at Buena Vista in 1854 and this induced its purchase..."

Agoston did write a latter of his own to the Agricultural Society a year after his arrival, describing his farm and viticultural pursuits. He implies that he purchased buildings in 1857 which included a press house, brandy distrillery and other structures, "of cheap construction, and some of them old." The press house could have been used by Rose.

Incidentally, in all of the records which still exist on the operation of Buena Vista under the Haraszthys; in all of the

newspaper and magazine descriptions of Buena Vista under the direction of Agoston Haraszthy, you will never find reference to a wine made earlier than 1857.

ALMOST NOTHING is known of the personal life of Rose. He is listed in San Francisco city directories from 1856 to 1862 as a practicing attorney. He was a member of the firm of "Payton, Duer, Lake & Rose." In 1861 he joined Sidney L. Johnson to form the firm of "Johnson & Rose" but after 1863 the name no longer appears in these directories.

Rose filed a claim in 1853 for 500 acres of the Napa Rancho in Napa County. His claim was confirmed by the courts in March, 1857 and for several years thereafter, his name can be found in Deed books as he sold off this land. There is no trace of him in other Napa historical records.

Rose may have moved to one of the more rural counties of California in the 1860s and there died. Or he may have gone east to fight in the Civil War. His name cannot be found in historical libraries, or at least it has escaped much diligent research. He was not a member of the well-chronicled Vigilance Committees of San Francisco, either.

To acknowledge that Julius K. Rose founded the Buena Vista winery would not detract from the much more important contributins made subsequently by Agoston Haraszthy. He built the structures which still survive, he had the tunnels built, he hired the Chinese--the first documented use of Chinese in wine making in California. Haraszthy wrote books and many articles on wine which made an enormous contribution to focusing public attention on Sonoma as a wine producing region.

Ghosts and the supernatural are frequently objects of derision by the general public.

It is curious that the reputation of Rose should resurface 125 years after he won so many awards for Buena Vista and Sonoma grapes. Certainly, this is not the last word on the life and times of Julius Rose.

Haywood

Chamizal Vineyard

By RICHARD PAUL HINKLE

Good wines invariably come from good grapes, and there are some pretty good grapes tucked away in the eastern folds of Schocken Hill, alongside Nathanson Creek and a couple or three kilometers northeast of our town square. That's where Peter Haywood gets the raw material for his 8000 case winery. "We call our little valley 'Chamizal,' which is the Spanish for a thicket of hardwood, the sort of scrub brush taht grows wild all over these hills," explains Haywood.

"I have always loved the outdoors, so I went into construction before I got into grape growing. Actually it was my Marine training that gave me an appreciation for land use, layout, and development. Which, as it happens, is the essence of vineyard management."

The tallish Stanford grad places great emphasis on getting wine quality from the vineyard. Wines give evidence of where they come from. And the wines of Haywood--fashioned by Peter Haywood's sweat and philosophy, Dennis Bowker's gritty vineyard management, and Charlie Tolbert's intuitive wine making skills--demonstrate those efforts.

THEIR EFFORTS start in the vineyard. "We have a variety of exposures and terrain up here," explains Bowker, who grew up all over the Midwest. "That gives us the opportunity to grow several varieties of wine grapes in one area, even though each has different climatic requirements. Because of the narrow inlet to the valley, its floor is very protected by the encircling ridges, leaving a sunny and warm spot perfectly suited to growing excellnt Cabernet Sauvignon.

"Slightly higher, and tucked beneath the lower reaches of the southern ridge is an area whose light breezes and cooler afternoons make a great home for White Riesling. On a more northerly ridge, whose slopes catch every ray of sunshine from sunup to sundown, terraces were cut into the rocky ground to carry sun-loving Zinfandel up the hill on a giant staircase. We call that 'Zinfandel Hill.' And west of Zinfandel Hill, a neighboring hilltop with unimpeded access to fresh Pacific breezes flowing in through the Golden Gate is where we chose to put Chardonnay, the largest varietal acreage at Chamizal. The last varietal, Merlot, was planted on some of the steepest terraces of the vineyard."

Chamizal Vineyard is quite a challenge of Bowker, with soils that run from sandy tuff to nearly solid rock. The latter is tough on equipment, and the variety requires special care, to the point of putting on fertilizer by hand, vine by vine.

"The difficulty of making these plants thrive in the steep, rocky ground is reqarded by the superb wines produced from their fruit," continues Bowker. "Only the best plants survive, and only the best fruit on each survives the rigors of existence, making the character of the harvested grapes quite rich. In addition, the wide differences in growing conditions within each vineyard plot gives a complexity to the wine that cannot come from more uniform environs."

THE IMPORT of sound viticultural practices is so crucial that Haywood decided to change his wine labels to reflect his

TURN TO PAGE 87

Weise brothers

They're planning to sell their historic vineyard

By TERESA MARIANI

While a lot of people have decided to get into the wine business in the past few years, Sonoma Insurance Broker Harry Weise has decided to get out of it.

Weise, and his brothers, Donald and Kenneth, own 30 acres of historic vineyards off of Nun's Canyon road. The vines growing on the property now could be as much as 70 or 80 years old, Weise said. Nobody knows for sure.

Because of the age of the vines and the fact that most of them are of varieties which wineries no longer use, the vineyards need to be replanted, Weise said.

That will take a lot of money

TURN TO PAGE 92

Photo by John Lynch

WORKERS HARVESTING GRAPES AT WEISE RANCH
Vines may be as much as 70-80 years old

Oldest family vineyard

By WILLIAM F. HEINTZ

Almost in the center of Sonoma Valley, at the entrance to Nun's Canyon and where Calabazas Creek flows under the main highway, there is a vineyard that has been in the same family or descendants for over 130 years. Grapes have been gathered from the vines each year, without interruption.

The Weise family has been tending this vineyard for most of those years; or it was taken care of by great grandfather Joseph A. Williams. This makes the Weise family the oldest grape growing family in Sonoma Valley and very likely, in all of Sonoma County, as well.

Harry and Suzanne Weise of Sonoma, are generally in charge of the 30-acre vineyard, although brothers Don and Kenny share ownership. Their grandfather, John Henry Weise married Sophia Williams, daughter of Joseph A. The Weise family goes back nearly as far as the Williams in Sonoma Valley, to the 1860s when great grandfather Christian Weise immigrated from Germany.

No one knows for certain when Joseph Williams planted the first vines in the historic vineyard. It could have been 1849, the year of the great California gold rush.

This seems the most likely founding of the vineyard because Williams built a winery nearby just three years later, or 1852.

TURN TO PAGE 86

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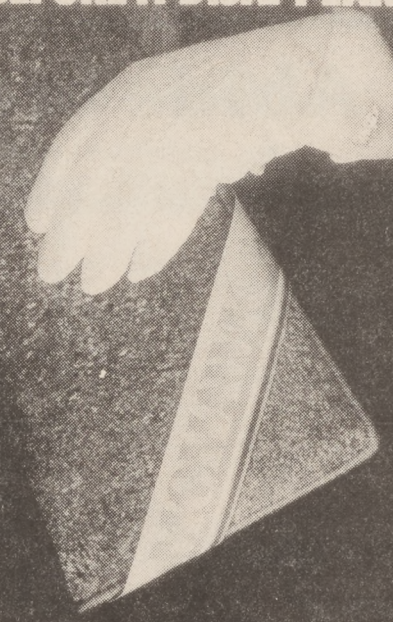

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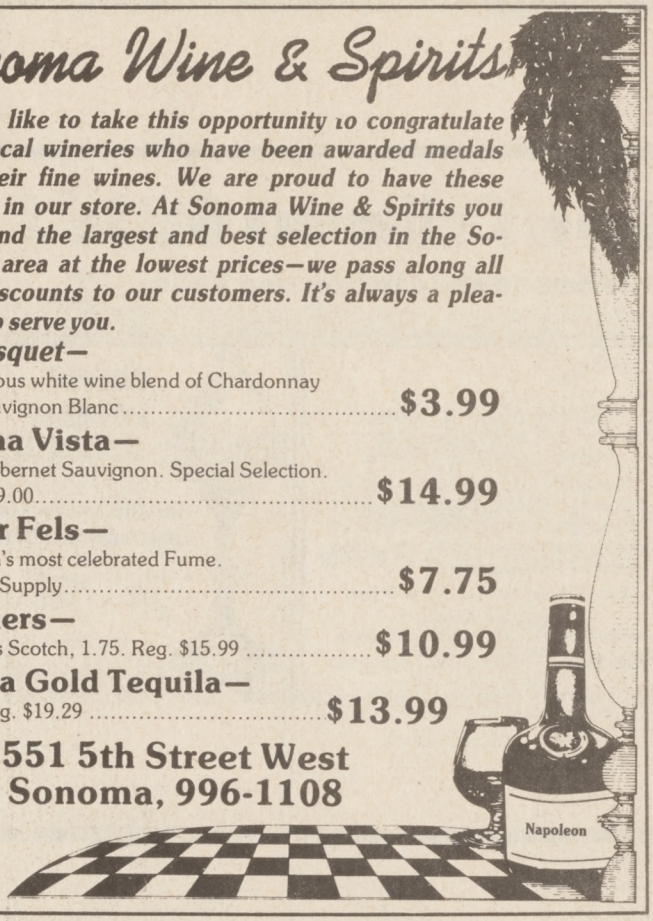

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Coturri

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 71

"grape glut" is "artificial," if not "temporary," because not all of the wine-consuming market has been tapped yet. "What are they drinking in Santa Fe, New Mexico?" he asked, "and once certain segments of the population get over the image of California wines being mediocre and that French wines are the only way to go, things will improve."

Also, he added, growers must learn to be more accurate and creative with what grape varieties they're putting in the ground. "Before, when the market was fat, people were just slopping anything out there."

'What are they drinking in Sante Fe, New Mexico?'

Coturri believes that foreign competition is, to a certain extent, healthy for the American wine market in that it provides a sort of educative process for consumers. But the U.S. government needs to assist in smoothing the edges out of the market, he added.

"With imaginative planning and by creating a new market with a product, plus government support, we should pull out of it," he said emphatically.

IN SONOMA VALLEY, Coturri asserts, "we have everything going for us" in terms of variety of grape growing areas and solid, well-established, individually-owned wineries. No longer should Sonoma be thought of as the "unsung cousin" of Napa Valley, he said, and people in the wine industry should work to promote

the valley's provincial qualities, much like the Europeans do.

While an eternal optimist, Coturri admits that this year will be a tough one on growers. He confesses to seeing "an excess" of Chardonnay in some of his vineyards and acknowledges that they will be hard-pressed in competing on the open market this season.

"The Gallo pricing (which has greatly submarined established and recommended prices in the North Coast area) has had a whiplash that is starting to affect the industry. Maybe it'll be good for the industry, but we won't know for a few years. But right now, it's hurting a bit.

"Again, maybe it'll force wineries and growers to be more imaginative, reevaluate what they're doing and develop a unique style that'll attract consumers," he emphasized. "It's healthy. It breeds quality."

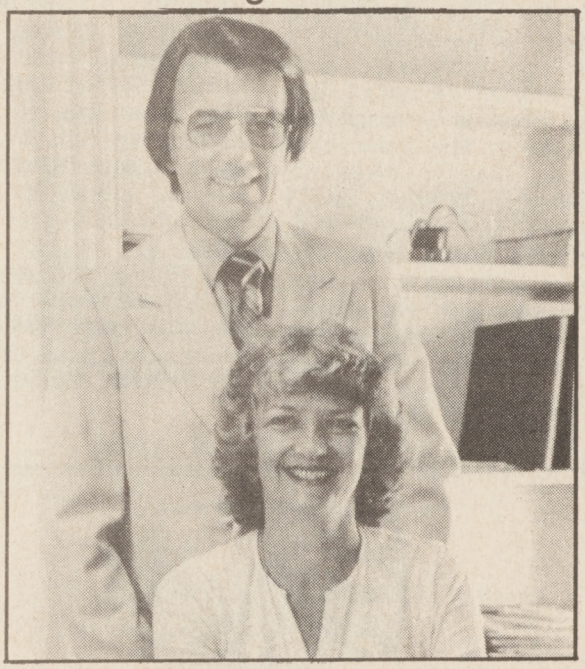
COTURRI literally grew up in the wine business. His relatives operated a winery on Lakeville highway near Petaluma and his grandfather, a native of Switzerland, was also involved in the business. Another relative worked as a cooper.

As a teenager, he farmed vineyards during the summer and with the rebirth of the wine industry in California, felt it was a "natural progression" to continue on into the business. He worked his way through college, attending classes at Sonoma State University ("I took English to learn how to speak Spanish all day," he laughed) before setting up his own business five years ago.

Coturri saw a need for such a service given the number of individual vineyards popping up all over the valley. It's a business that allows little time for relaxation. "It's not like a job, it's a life. There's always something to be done and it always seems to be six weeks late getting done."

His brother, Tony, is the wine maker at Coturri & Sons Winery, and his father, Harry, is another partner in the winery business.

Best wishes for a successful Vintage Festival



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Oldest Family

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 80

SOME OF the details of the Williams grape legacy can be found in an interview with him published January 1, 1881 in the Sonoma Democrat of Santa Rosa. The story reads in part:

"Joseph A. Williams owns a vineyard just beyond Mrs. Warfield's in the Glen Ellen district, and claims it as a pioneer vineyard. He showed the writer the first building erected in this valley especially for a wine cellar--a large log cabin, built originally into an excavation made into a steep bank. The interstices between the logs are filled with clay, and the whole covered with shakes. This cellar was built twenty-eight years ago, in 1852 and the logs were felled and hewn and the shakes split by Mr. Williams, then in the prime of life."

Williams had over 30,000 gallons of wine on hand when he was interviewed, made from such grapes as the Burger, "Red" Zinfandel, Mission and "Sweet Water" Chasselas. The White Mission wine was described as "excellent, with flavor, body and bouquet".

One century later, the Weise vineyard still reflects this old mixture of vines. Harry says you can find Zinfandels, Sylvaner, Alicante Bouschet, Carignane, Burger, Golden Chasselas and maybe one or two others unidentified.

NO WINE was made by the Weise family after Prohibition began but the old Log Cabin winery could still be located, that is the remnants, on Calabazas creek. A much larger redwood winery was built nearby in the late nineteenth century and was a landmark until burned in 1974. A transient is suspected of setting the blaze.

Ranking next to the Weise family in grape growing longevity in the county is Don and Patricia Schmidt of Dry Creek Valley. Her great-grandfather acquired a vineyard in 1856 when he settled northwest of Healdsburg.

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At Community Center

The following events are scheduled at the Sonoma Community Center, 276 E. Napa st., Sonoma, to be held in conjunction with this year's Vintage Festival:

Judged Flower Show—Sat., Sept. 24, noon to 6 p.m., and Sun., Sept. 25, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Lunch & refreshments available throughout show time.

Gem and Mineral Show—Sat., Sept. 24 & Sun., Sept. 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Presented by Valley of the Moon Gem & Mineral Club.

Boutique Booths—Individual artisan, clubs, etc. Sat., Sept. 24 & Sun., Sept. 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Presented by Sonoma Community Center.

Haywood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 79

principles. Formerly a tan parchment color, with black lettering (with a gold highlight around the varietal name), the new label is in full color, with the drawing of a vineyardist pruning Chamizal's bilateral (two arm) cordon trained, hillside grown vines.

Haywood is today defined by four varietal wines and two generics. Included in the former group are a complex and fruity Chardonnay, a crisply green and dry White Riesling, a richly-fruited Zinfandel of no little body, and a hard, tannic, full-fruited Cabernet Sauvignon. The white is a blend of Riesling, Chardonnay, and Gewurztraminer, while the red, dubbed "Spaghetti Red," is an old "vineyard blend" wine, meaning that everything from Carignane and Early Burgundy to Pinot Noir and Zinfandel is in the mix.

"But it's the uniqueness of our Chamizal Vineyard that gives us the opportunity to oversee the wine making process from the grapevine to the bottle, and thus be able to produce wines of consistent high quality at prices that are competitive in today's market," concludes Haywood.

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Photo by Joan Casserly

SONOMA MOUNTAIN VINEYARDIST TOM MCCREA
He grows grapes for Chateau St. Jean

Tom McCrea

28 acres of vines on Sonoma Mountain

By JOAN CASSERLY

It is surprising to learn that Tom McCrea has only been in the wine business nine years.

It could easily be assumed that a person of his knowledge of the industry had been raised in it, surrounded by it.

In actuality, McCrea, who relocated from southern California to Sonoma Valley in 1974, had purchased the vineyard operation from his father, who had owned and managed it four years previously.

The owner of approximately 100 acres of land in Sonoma Valley, McCrea is utilizing 28 acres of that land for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vineyards. The grapes are purchased solely by Chateau St. Jean Winery and Vineyards, of Kenwood.

The remaining 72 acres of land are predominately unused forest.

McCrea delegates the day-to day operation of the vineyards to local cellar master and wine maker, Don Van Staaveren.

McCrea basically controls the overall plans of the vineyards, the use of the property and the plans for any expansion.

THE SUCCESS of McCrea's grape growing business largely lies with the ideal location of his vineyards. The 28 non-irrigated acres are located on the eastern slopes of the Sonoma Mountains.

The seemingly perfect setting is amid numerous dry hillsides complete with several massive redwood groves.

McCrea has made future plans to expand his vineyard area by approximately 10 to 12 additional acres without having to destroy too much forest land.

The vineyard itself has different micro-climates in varying location and there are three types of soil found on the 28 acres of land. McCrea's hillside acreage received a great deal more rain than the Valley beneath it last year.

Approximately 97 inches of rain saturated the Sonoma Mountains last season and the run-off has maintained the land so well that even in the dry, heated summer months, the land does not require any irrigation.

At present, the mature vines are still pushing green growth just on the basis of the ground water.

The vineyards are sheltered by the mountain, which prevents problems with wind or frost. Rabbits and deer pose no substantial threat to the grape vines because of fences and hungry birds account for just a 10 percent crop loss.

YET, EVEN presented with the unpredictability and risks of nature, McCrea is obviously pleased to be in the business of

grape growing and is equally pleased to be a part of Sonoma Valley.

"Sonoma Valley is a relatively small area with a tremendous variety of vineyard locations to give us a chance of making more and better wines," he said.

"This is a very satisfying business," he continued, "There is a nice group of people involved in it and there is a status and aura about it that intrigues the general public."

As for the so-called "rivalry" between Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley, McCrea dismisses the notion that one should even exist.

"The basic difference is the narcissism of the people involved," he said emphatically.

"Napa is a bigger area, they produce more fruit and more wine," he said, "and they get a lot more printed space."

"We (Sonoma Valley) should stop worrying about Napa," he said, "We have to develop our own personality and character."

McCrea contended that Sonoma Valley wine should be judged on its own merits rather than be compared with Napa.

"Our products can stand on their own merits," McCrea said.

MOVING FURTHER away from home, McCrea believes that foreign wine competition has done more to educate the general public on wine and has contributed to the increased enjoyment of wine.

One source of concern for McCrea is those countries, such as Argentina and Chile, which do not permit the importation of American wines without astronomical tariffs, and at the same time are exporting their wines to the United States.

"Our government should give us the same protection that their governments give them," he said

As for the future of the business, McCrea is optimistic.

"There is no where to go but up," he said, "The market is there.

"Hard liquor is more of a drug than a food," he said, "But wine is more of a food than a drug. It truly complements a meal."

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Vintage Festival Greetings

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Learn how to install a kitchen

A step-by-step program that teaches people how to select, design and install a new kitchen by themselves is being offered by Friedman Bros. Kitchen Center in Santa Rosa.

Free classes have been scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday, September 24th and October 8th at the store at 4055 Santa Rosa Avenue. One class is all it takes. Participants will see model kitchens with new ideas in cabinets, sinks, appliances, storage and counter surfaces. There will also be a demonstration kitchen which is in cut-away form to clearly show installation techniques involved.

A professional kitchen designer will be on hand to consult about individual kitchens and to help with cost estimates for doing the project yourself. The classes are free, but you must have reservations because seating is limited.

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Shepard

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 56

Joy Shaffer and Jill Aigner, are the other trustees.

He and his wife, Diane, live in a new home on the approximately 160 acres of the Jack London ranch still privately owned. The rest of the famed author's 1,500-acre Beauty Ranch is a state park.

SHEPARD was born on the ranch. He earned a degree in dairy husbandry at Cal Poly and was a dairy rancher and later a state park ranger before he became a grape grower.

Jackson Temple, one of California's first Supreme Court justices, owned the ranch in the 1860s, put in grapes and even had a winery. Later, the property was sold to the Kroehler and Froling winery. The earthquake of 1906 destroyed the winery. London bought the ranch in 1910 and replaced most of the grapes with eucalyptus trees. By the 1940s all the grapes were gone and Irving Shepard and Milo Shepard later had to start from scratch.

"I do everything in the natural way", said Shepard. "I don't use any pesticides and we don't have any irrigation. Those redwood trees tell you what kind of moisture we have. This area is frost free. We're on volcanic ash, facing the sun. There are many microclimates and you plant your grapes accordingly".

Because of the so-called glut of grapes, Shepard said he expects a drop of perhaps 20 percent in the price of run-of-the-mill grapes. "I still think the best varieties may bring around $1,400 a ton".

Shepard doesn't think there's very much of a glut and that there is not really a glut in Sonoma Valley. Some of the so-called glut is due to the fact that some wineries are holding on to their wines longer. Kenwood is now keeping Shepard's Cabernet for three years, where it formerly released the wine after two years.

Shepard thinks that wine tastings plus the writings and comments of wine experts in the press help the industry

more than medals. Wine drinkers are getting more sophisticated and it's not enough now just to tell them the sugar content of a wine. Kenwood Winery puts a Jack London Vineyard label on Shepard's product and lists the harvest date, composition (usually 100 percent of the grape named), sugar, alcohol, acid, barrel aging and bottle date.

SHEPARD has a smooth operation in his vineyards that doesn't require a large work force. He and his son, Brian, a student at Santa Rosa Junior College, take care of many of the chores. The rancher says he has five men for five months of the year and he keeps two a couple more months.

His problems are minimal, some mildew and poison oak. Mexicans get bad cases of poison oak, it seems.

Shepard's other son, Neil Shepard, works at Bob Norrbom's garage in Glen Ellen, and his daughter, Lisa, has a wine shop in Sand Point, Idaho.

Shepard foresees the new Sonoma County Grape Growers Association as becoming a vital force in the upcoming new era of closer relationships between grape growers and wine makers. It is hoped that the association will sign up at least 400 or so of the county's 1,000 grape growers.

ONE IMPORTANT function of the association will be to arrange for its members to cooperate on a more individual basis with the wine makers on the setting of a basic price structure, said Shepard, as his wife served he and his guest coffee and coffee cake.

Other benefits he envisions from the association include advertising with a better force, dissemination of technical information to members, more influence with the Supervisors (Shepard says this county is lax in grape research), and sponsorship of an ordinance to protect grape growers from neighbors who move in later and complain about agricultural uses.

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Weise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 80

and time, something none of the Weise brothers can afford to channel into the family property right now. The brothers decided this summer to put the vineyards on the market sometime soon.

KENWOOD VINEYARDS currently manages the ranch, and takes care of all the pruning, disking, and harvesting of the vineyards. The winery buys the grapes it wants (usually Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc, the Weise's contemporary varieties), and tries to sell the rest to other wineries.

'We think it's one of the oldest vineyards in Sonoma County'

The arrangement with Kenwood Vineyards doesn't leave a lot of management chores for the Weises. "I pay whatever bills need to be paid, and that's it," Harry Weise said.

The increasing problems Kenwood Winery has had selling the Weise's surplus grapes in the past years was a major factor in the decision to sell the family vineyards, Weise said.

"With the situation the way it is today with grape prices, its questionable whether or not they (the older varieties) will even be picked," this year, he said.

"If we had to go out and find a market for the types we have, I don't think we'd be able to."

Things weren't always this way at the Weise ranch, though. Weise's great-grandfa-

'Before you plant a grapevine, make sure you have someone who wants to buy the grapes'

ther, Joseph Williams, founded the vineyards after moving to Sonoma county in 1850.

THE FAMILY at one point had 360 acres of vineyards; but those were sold in parcels many years ago, paring the ranch down to the current 70 acres, 30 of them vineyards.

"We think it's one of the oldest vineyards in Sonoma County," Weise said with pride.

The family even used to operate a winery on the property, but they closed it down in the 1950's, and the old winery building has since burned down. Weise keeps a painting of it hanging in his office at North Bay Insurance.

Weise stressed that new entrants in the vineyard business should make sure they have enough acreage to support their venture.

Variety may also be the key to a long market life, he said. "I think you're going to have to be a really good operator who's producing quality grapes in order to stay in the marketplace."

Weise had one more word of advice for would-be wine tycoons: "Before you plant a grapevine, make sure you have someone who wants to buy the grapes."

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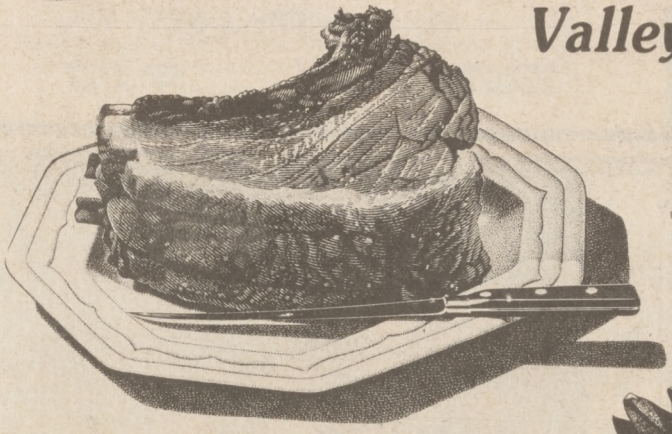

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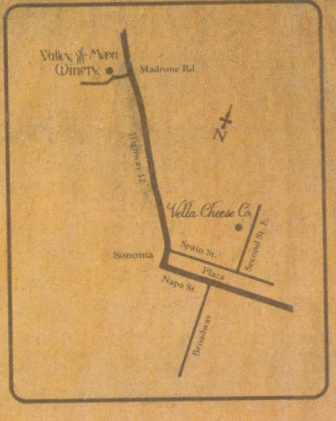

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